CHRISTIAN TRUTH

AND

MODERN OPINION.

SEVEN SERMONS

PREACHED IN NEW-YORK BY

CLERGYMEN OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

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PREFACE.

THE following Course of Sermons was given the last winter, under the auspices of an association of clergymen in the Episcopal Church. There will be found such an order in the topics, and such essential agreement in the line of Christian thought, as to give them place in one volume; yet each author has freely written his own convictions, and is alone responsible for his sermon. It is hoped that the publication may do somewhat toward that harmony of Christian faith with science, which is no dream, but one of the most real aims of all scholars in our one-sided time.

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THE

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE.

BY

C. S. HENRY, D.D.,

DELIVERED IN CALVARY CHURCH, NEW-YORK.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE.

"THE Lord hath prepared His throne in the heavens; and His kingdom ruleth over all."—PSALM 103 : 19.

MY BRETHREN: The Christian idea of Providence has its ground in the Christian idea of God as an infinite, self-existent, spiritual Being—personal, intelligent, and free—distinct from Nature, before Nature, and above Nature.

There are three distinct conceptions of the Divine Activity which rest in this ground—namely, God as Creator, God as Upholder, and God as Orderer.

These three conceptions hold inwardly together; but the latter is the special conception of Divine Providence—God as Orderer.

The Christian idea is that the same power which created and which upholds the universe is the ultimate cause of all the changes, all the events that come to pass in the universe; that His supreme will is eternally active in the ordering of every thing; that nothing comes by chance, nothing by

any fatality or necessity outside of God; that the history of the universe is one great eternal drama, of which God is at once the Poet and the Manager, and which is for ever unfolding itself under His all-seeing eye, His ever-watchful superintendence, and His supreme control.

This is the Christian idea of God's Providence.

Atheism subverts this idea by denying its ground in the being of God. If there be no God, there can, of course, be no Providence. This every one sees at once. But the converse of this—that if there be no Providence, there can be no God in any proper sense of the word—is not at once so clearly seen. Yet it is equally true.

II. I do not propose to go into a confutation of atheism. For the special purpose of this discourse, it would be a needless taking up of time. I speak now only to such as, along with myself, believe that there is a Living Personal God, the Creator of the universe. I assume the existence of such a God as the rational basis for the Christian doctrine of Providence.

And I say at the outset, that the notions of those who admit the existence of such a God, and yet deny the Christian representation of God's ever-active superintendence, direction, and control of the

whole course of events in the universe, seem to me quite as incompatible with any satisfactory rational explanation of the universe as the naked atheism which says there is no God at all, or the pantheistic materialism which identifies God with the universe —making Him an impersonal, dead God-no-God. In effect, what sort of a God is one that creates a universe over which He does not exert a constant, all-ordering control? Is the idea of such a God really any better than the old Stoic idea of Fate? Is the contemplation of such a God at all satisfactory to the demands of the human reason, or to the wants of the human heart? This I am sure no one can maintain. And I am equally sure that the conception of a universe perpetually watched over, cared for, and controlled by the infinite power, intelligence, wisdom, and love of a Living Personal God, is the only one that completely satisfies the needs of the human reason and of the human heart.

III. But it is objected that it is difficult and even impossible to harmonize such a conception with what is taken to be a pre-established course of things, and particularly with what are called the Laws of Nature.

But laws can not establish themselves, can not execute themselves.

What is Law? Is it any thing that exists by itself—any thing that has its ground in itself alone? No. Law is a purely relative term. It relates to the idea of Force. In its highest generic conception, Law is an established Rule for the working of a Force. The laws of the universe are the rules according to which the forces of the universe produce the phenomena of the universe. The primary relation of the laws is *not* to the phenomena, but to the forces which produce the phenomena.

It is quite noticeable, by the way, how the physical science of our day runs out into the assumption of forces. I do not object to this; far otherwise. It is a perfectly legitimate assumption, only it is not the product of the Scientific Method —as that is commonly understood among scientific men—but of Philosophic Thought. It is the assumption of something that lies outside the sphere of Science, in the ordinary acceptation of the term among scientific men. But, as I hold that there is a sphere of truth beyond the reach of physical science, I can have no quarrel with those physical scientists for assuming the existence of something which their science can not scientifically demonstrate, only I confess myself amused when I see it done by some scientific men, who at the same time dismiss with a sneer or a jeer every thing which they

call "metaphysical," as having no title to recognition among respectable thinkers! Why! the very idea of force, which they assume and talk about, is precisely one of the most purely metaphysical of all possible conceptions! What is force *per se*—force in itself? Is it any thing phenomenal, any thing that manifests itself by itself to our senses, any thing demonstrable by scientific analysis? No; it is purely ideal; it is something, the recognition of which is necessitated by the laws of thought. It does not alter the case to call the forces they assume mechanical, chemical, electrical, magnetic, vital, or the like. Those epithets denote only certain phenomenal ingredients in a concrete conception, and abstracted from those epithets, the force itself remains a purely ideal conception.

I myself also assume that there are forces in the universe—forces physical and forces spiritual. But these forces did not create themselves, nor establish the laws of their action. Back of the phenomena, of which the laws are the generalized expression, lie the forces that produce the phenomena, and back of these forces lies the great First Cause —the supreme Intelligence and Will which created the forces, and prescribed their laws of action. There is no other rational hypothesis to account either for what science calls the "Laws of Nature,"

or for those Laws of Mind which the philosophic analysis of our consciousness reveals.

IV. But the special question is, in what reasonably conceivable way to represent to ourselves the ever-active, all-ordering intervention and control of Divine Providence in the universe of Matter and of Mind? The physical forces of the universe seem to be determined in their action by fixed, invariable laws; and its spiritual forces—its moral agencies—are free, and can not be irresistibly determined by any external power, natural or supernatural. How then to frame a possible, reasonable conception of the way or method of Divine Providence?

Let us try to see whatever we may be able to see. Modestly and reverently, let us try to see.

(1.) As to the Physical forces of the universe. Some philosophers have said they are nothing but the direct and immediate action of the Divine Will, and so have made short work in solving the question of Providence in the sphere of Nature: God's will is the sole force.

I do not hold with such philosophers. I take the forces of Nature to be creations of God; distinct from Him, and coeval with the creation of matter.

And as to the laws of these physical forces—

what we call the laws of Nature—we must remember that our knowledge of them is empirical, the result of experience and experiment. They are, you know, mere generalizations from an observation of particulars which (however extensive, and constantly enlarging with the progress of science) is necessarily limited; and their invariableness is a mere assumption resting upon an induction which (however satisfactory) is necessarily imperfect. There is no necessary contradiction in supposing that any given phenomena may be the product of other forces acting under other laws than those which we now explain them by. And the progress of science is every day replacing old explanations by new ones.

The forces of Nature being then the product of God's Creative Will, and the Laws of Nature being the expression of His Legislative Will, they are under His perpetual, absolute control.

But it is not to be thought that these laws, so replete in their myriads of special enactments with such marks of infinite intelligence and wisdom, such marvelous adaptations to purpose and function in their million-fold manifestations—it is not to be thought that such laws, established by such a Legislator, are liable to be capriciously repealed, suspended, or changed.

I do not wonder that, among those who have most profoundly studied the laws of Nature, there are some who invest these laws with a sort of autocratic, regal or vice-regal sovereignty, and make them "immutable" in such sort that God's hands are self-tied, so that He can not or will not interfere in the sphere of Nature by any special immediate exertion of supernatural power.

But this notion is untenable. All that has any reasonable claim to be admitted is that God can not, will not, and does not interfere capriciously with the established course of Nature. It is not to be admitted that He can not, will not, and does not interfere with it in the way some men call a "violation" of the laws of Nature, provided it seem good to Him to do so, for reasons known to Himself, which may or may not be known to us. It is absurd to say He can not, and impossible to demonstrate that He will not or does not act immediately and supernaturally *in*, *among*, and *upon* the laws of Nature to produce extraordinary and special results.

And herein lies the sufficient rational basis for the belief in a miracle-working God.

I do not now go into a particular discussion of the subject of the Christian Miracles. I content myself with signalizing its rational ground, and

have only further to observe that, in respect to any and every special case of alleged miracle, the question is purely a question of historical evidence. The Duke of Argyll tells us that this "seems now to be admitted on all hands," and Professor Huxley says, "denying the possibility of miracles seems to me quite as unjustifiable as speculative atheism." He means rationally "unjustifiable."

But what we have to consider more particularly is the general or ordinary method of God's constant intervention in Nature—controlling it, yet without miracle.

And here it is to our purpose to observe that it is absurd to say, and impossible to demonstrate, that God can not, will not, and does not *so* act upon, manage, and control the forces of Nature as through their agency, and without any "violation" of the laws of Nature, to accomplish special effects in Nature which would otherwise not have been brought about.

And not only is it absurd to say God can not, and impossible to demonstrate that He does *not* thus act, but that, in point of fact, He *does* thus act is rendered credible by millions of facts of the same kind in the sphere of human action. All over the earth, in every age, every day and hour, human

intelligence and human will have been at work in controlling the forces and laws of Nature in subservience to human uses, combining, adjusting, and managing them, so as through them to produce results which the forces of Nature, left to themselves, would never have produced. Men have achieved these results, not by "violating" the laws of Nature, but by using them. And what marvelous results in our day! The most tremendous forces of Nature have been made obedient servants to man's will, and as easily controlled as the child's little go-cart. The steamers, that plow all waters and connect all lands; the railways, that bring all places together; the lightning-wires, that enable men to whisper to each other across continents and oceans; and the thousand other engines and machineries which the skill of man has set going in factories and in fields—all these are the product of man's will, working with and controlling the forces of nature, according to their laws.

You see the bearing of this. If man, by his intelligence and will, can thus bend the forces of Nature to his uses, how foolish to doubt but God may do the like, and to an infinitely greater extent, by as much as His knowledge of the forces of Nature, and His wisdom and skill and ability to manage and control them, are infinitely superior to man's!

And this managing and controlling of the forces of Nature, so as by and through them to work out the good purposes of His holy will, without "violating" the laws of Nature—this I take to be the reasonably possible general way of God's ordinary Providential agency in the Physical universe. And you see what a powerful support this theory derives from the analogy of what man's intelligence and will are perpetually accomplishing in Nature.

(2.) But besides God's Providence in the Physical universe, we have to consider also His Providence in the Spiritual universe—in the sphere of spiritual forces—that is to say, His action upon the minds and wills of His rational creatures, and in what way it may be reasonably conceived.

And it is enough to say here, that the free-will of finite spiritual beings, though not subject to irresistible control, like the forces of Nature, is yet open to the influence of motives; and that all the resources of such influence are at the command of the infinite intelligence and will of God.

As to human beings, whose nature is partly physical and partly spiritual, it is obvious that the free-will of such beings is open to the combined influence both of physical and of moral motives; and God can so combine and order all external events and circumstances in the world of Nature as to

make them fall in with and promote, or restrain and thwart men's outward aims and efforts. And He can also speak persuasively to man's inmost spirit—mind, heart, and will—both indirectly through natural or through human agencies, and directly by immediate Divine suggestion and impression; and, finally, it is impossible for us to set limits to the power He can thus exert over the wills of His rational creatures without violating their essential freedom.

Such, then, summarily, is the *rationale*, the reasonable way of conceiving how Divine Providence may act effectively, both in the Physical and in the Spiritual sphere; and it affords a sufficient reasonable ground for the Christian representation of God's supreme, ever-active, all-ordering government of the universe of Matter and of Mind.

For myself, I do not doubt the truth of the Christian doctrine. I accept it as a natural corollary from the idea of God as the infinite Personal Creator and Upholder of the universe; and as a doctrine which (as I said at the outset) satisfies not only the needs of the human reason demanding some ground to stand on, but also the deepest inmost wants of the human heart ever crying out for a living God and Father.

V. In the statement of the Christian doctrine on Providence which I laid down at the opening of this discourse, and in all that I have said in the progress of it, the Providential government of God has been represented as all-comprehending in its scope.

But I wish to call your attention a little more particularly to this point: that God's Providence embraces the universe not only as a great whole, but in all its parts; that it includes all the worlds that roll through the immensity of space—not only as an aggregate assemblage of countless systems circling round a central Throne, but each system and each separate world and all the dwellers in them, not collectively only, but individually also.

> "There's not the smallest star which thou behold'st,
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins."

In every smallest star there is a song which both Nature and the Spirits there sing together in unison—hymning to the Maker and Orderer of all: "God hath prepared His seat in the heavens, and His kingdom ruleth over all."

But there are those—and this is the reason why I have called your special attention to the point I have made—there are those who believe in a Divine Providence, but say that it relates only to the im-

mutable essence of things as God has made them; that it embraces the universe as a great whole, but not all particular events; that it includes humanity as a race, or men as nations and states, but not individual men; that to realize God as actually attending to and regulating all single and daily events, all transient phenomena and accidents, is to degrade Him to the level of finite beings; that such representations are sheer Anthropomorphism—childish and heathenish, and are entirely incompatible with the majesty and perfection of His nature.

Now, as to this "Anthropomorphism"—or making God like men: it is a great scare-word in some quarters. But I need only remind you that we can not represent to ourselves God's activity except in some approximate way, by figured conceptions derived from the consciousness of our own causal power.

And I deny that we thereby necessarily make God to be merely such an one as we ourselves are: on the contrary, I say that we sufficiently arrest ourselves from doing so by interposing the idea of His infinitude. And that is enough to justify our way of speaking of Him. It is not anthropomorphism in any objectionable, childish, or heathenish sense.

Moreover (and that should be sufficient for us),

Jesus Christ always used such anthropomorphic expressions. They run all through the record of His teachings, as also of His apostles.

I deny too that the representation of God as regulating particular events and the affairs of individuals is incompatible with the majesty and perfection of His nature. Those who say it is divest God of His infinitude and subject Him to finite conditions derived from their notions of an earthly sovereign —which is precisely anthropomorphic in an absurdly unjustifiable sense.

It does not follow that what does not comport with the conditions or the majesty of an earthly monarch must necessarily be incompatible with the conditions or derogatory to the majesty of God. It may be impossible for an earthly sovereign—who has to conduct the administration of public affairs in a large sphere and on great general views—to attend personally to and regulate the private affairs of all his subjects individually, and derogatory to his dignity to attempt it. But what of that? The infinite Ruler—precisely because He is infinite—can at once govern the universe as a great whole, and at the same time attend to the particular concerns of every individual person. It costs Him nothing. It derogates nothing from His majesty, but enhances our conception of it. Moreover, for

Him to do so is precisely what belongs to Him to do as the infinite, wise, and good Father.

Besides, we must remind those who object to the idea of God as actually attending to and regulating all single events, that this minute attention and regulation may have an intimate relation to the great plan of the Divine government of the universe as a whole. We have often seen what wide-reaching consequences seemingly unimportant events may have; and we have read of ten thousand instances of things as trivial as the spilling of a cup of tea on a lady's silk dress affecting the destiny of states and nations. And how can we tell, but the most trivial event in our life (as it may seem to us) may have a bearing on the whole future course of our existence—here and hereafter—and also upon the fortunes of humanity and of the universe? There is a passage in De Quincey's writings that illustrates this truth in his grandly periodic style. Speaking of memorable attempts at escape, and in particular those of Charles I. and Louis XVI., he says:

"But alike the madness or the providential wisdom of such attempts commands our profoundest interest. These attempts belong to history. And it is in that relation that they become philosophically so impressive. Generations through an infinite series are contemplated by us as silently awaiting

the turning of a sentinel round a corner, or the casual echo of a footstep. Dynasties have trepidated on the chance of a sudden cry of an infant carried in a basket; and the safety of empires has been suspended, like the descent of an avalanche, upon the moment earlier or the moment later of a cough or a sneeze. And high above all ascends solemnly the philosophic truth, that the least things and the greatest are bound together as elements equally essential in the mysterious universe."

Now, this may not be equally true of all single and seemingly trivial events. We need not say or admit that it is. But it may be true of some such events. And who but God can tell which to make matters of special attention and regulation, and which to "leave to themselves," as we say?

But what it chiefly concerns us to do is always to think of God as at least as good as a wise and loving earthly father, who cares for his children individually, and not merely in the lump.

Jesus Christ always spoke of God as "our Father." Father! That is a word of the heart. Our infinite Father! With a Father's heart of love for all His spiritual children, Who concerns Himself with all our wants and needs in ways as particular and minute as would be implied in the

actual numbering of the hairs of our heads. Jesus bids us pray to God for things temporal as well as for things eternal, for material as well as for spiritual blessings, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive." Whatsoever "good things"—things good for you—ask, and ye shall receive.

VI. I abstain from going into a particular discussion of the Christian doctrine on Prayer—its full and exact meaning and contents, and the precise conditions under and within which it holds true.

I will only remind you that the *rationale* of God's Providential action and control in the universe of Matter and of Mind, which I have given at some length in this discourse, furnishes the sufficient and abundant reasonable ground for the Christian faith in a Prayer-answering God; and that you see it is both absurd to say God can not, and impossible to demonstrate that He does not answer prayers for physical as well as for spiritual blessings.

I may add, too, that it is indispensably necessary to bear in mind that the question in regard to God's answering prayers for physical blessings turns not on the invariableness or immutability of the laws of nature, but on the relation of the power of the Divine Will to the forces of nature. And you will

remember that I have already shown how, in ten thousand cases, the power of man's will is perpetually combining and managing the forces of nature so as to change the order of events without disturbing the order of nature or violating its laws, and how absurd it is to say that God can not do the same.

A word or two here in reference to the pretension made by some "men of science" (as they call themselves) to the right of subjecting the question respecting the efficacy of prayer for physical blessings to a "scientific" determination.

I object, by the way, *in limine*, to the fashion in which our modern physicists arrogate to themselves exclusively or eminently the title of "men of science," as if there were no science but physical science. For myself, I believe there is another than a merely physical science, and a higher one. There is a metaphysical science as truly as there is a physical science; a science of the supernatural as truly as of the natural; of the non-phenomenal as truly as of the phenomenal; of the infinite as well as of the finite; a science of God, as well as a science of Nature.

But it is idle to make the matter a merely verbal question—a question about the right use of the word science. Let us—in respect to the point now

before us—let us let these "men of science" (as they are fond of calling themselves, with a superior air), let us let them have the word in their own sense.

Science, according to them, is only of the phenomenal, the physical world. It has to do only with the laws of Nature—laws that relate to physical forces—laws that are necessary and immutable.

But prayer relates to spiritual and supernatural forces, to the finite free-will of man and to the infinite free-will of God. How then can their science determine any thing about the action of such forces? Think of it. A physical determination of a metaphysical relation! Why, the pretension is absurd. It proceeds upon a violation of the old logical maxim and necessary law of human thought—*heterogenea non sunt comparanda*—things generically disparate can not be brought into comparison. They might as rationally attempt to tell us how much the whiteness of snow is whiter than the sweetness of sugar, or to determine the height of a mountain by smelling at it with their noses, or to weigh an imponderable essence in a pair of scales, or to put a mathematical proposition into a crucible and melt it, in order to demonstrate "scientifically" that the angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. Prayer lies outside the sphere of science,

as these "men of science" count science. This is the sufficient answer to their pretension.

I have now done with all the leading infidel objections to the Christian doctrine of God's supreme all-ordering Providence in the universe of Matter and of Mind.

VII. But besides infidelities of denial, there are, on the other hand, superstitions of belief.

In regard to these, I can only say that to believe in the truth of God's all-ordering Providence, is one thing; to apply it to the interpretation of particular events, is another thing. Undoubtedly there are many rash, fanciful, erroneous, absurd, and fanatical interpretations made. Nothing, for instance, is more common than to construe special or extraordinary calamities, in certain cases, as Divine punishments. Thus, Job's friends explained the old chieftain's extraordinary afflictions as tokens of Divine retribution for secret sin.

But our Lord rebukes this sort of unauthorized interpretation: "Think ye those eighteen, on whom the tower of Siloam fell and slew them, were sinners above all that dwelt at Jerusalem? I tell you nay."

Undoubtedly we do right in saying the tower of Siloam fell because it was badly built, or some na-

tural cause had disturbed its gravity. It would, doubtless, have fallen precisely at the moment it fell, if there had been nobody beneath. Those eighteen were there at the time, and they were crushed in the fall. It was a remarkable coincidence. God's all-foreseeing, all-disposing Providence ordered it. No doubt of that. But Jesus says it was not because those men were enormous sinners. For aught that He says to the contrary, they may have been better men than the average of Jerusalem sinners. And their sinfulness, be it great or little, may have had nothing to do with their being under the tower at the moment it fell, and being crushed to death by its fall. So far as being sinful goes, all men would be obnoxious (as Jesus intimates) to some similar catastrophe. In this case, God ordered the event for good reasons, known to Himself. He has a perfect right to cut short human life in any way He may please, and it is not to be supposed as possible for Him to do injustice to His creatures in ordering the time or manner of their death.

God's Providence is a Providence of equal love. There is neither caprice, nor favoritism, nor hatred, nor dislike of individuals in it. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust."

He lets the good man accommodate the bad man by exchanging passage-tickets with him. The bad man sails in the steamer of this week, and gets safely home; the good man sails in the next steamer, and is lost by the sinking of the ship.

The overturned railway-train crushes to death the meek, unselfish Sister of Charity, bound on a journey of mercy, while the hardened villain sitting close by, with his head full of schemes of crime, is spared.

What is the special Divine meaning in cases like this? Who but God can tell? We only know that equal wisdom, equal love, orders all.

While, therefore, we can not believe too strongly in God's all-ordering Providence, we can not be too careful in interpreting His special design. What we know not now, we shall know hereafter; at least, I think we shall. Meantime, we may rest assured that He orders the destiny of every one of His spiritual creatures, both in this world and in the world beyond, for their highest good.

VIII. But let us pass now to a brief consideration of God's Providential government in relation to humanity as a race, and to the universe as a whole—to the contemplation of God in history.

As to human history, its whole course, from the beginning, has been, is now, and ever will be, conducted by the Most High. Human history is not, indeed, like the world of space, the mere product of the Almighty will, nor the mere product of human activity alone. There is a human element in it, and there is an element that is Divine. But the infinite Ruler presides over the busy activities of human freedom through generations and ages; prepares the scene; calls the actors forth in their time and turn, and, through their action, carries onward from age to age the unfolding of some great Divine plan, which embraces Humanity as a whole. There is, doubtless, a Divine idea ever realizing itself in the historical life of Humanity, as truly as in the life of Nature—in the events of human history as in the phenomena of the material world. The mind and hand of the Almighty, as well as the mind and hand of man, have been in all the fates and fortunes of the nations; in the rise and fall of empires, the revolutions of dynasties, the wars and conquests, battles and sieges, negotiations and treaties, with which the pages of historical books are filled. Invisibly in and behind the visible procession of events, the Supreme Disposer has presided with a great purpose of His own.

We must, however, remember that humanity is

destined to exist in a sphere beyond this world. The earthly history of the human race is not a complete drama in itself. It is one act only. When the curtain drops at the end of the world, it drops but to rise again for another act, on another and a vaster stage. Christianity announces, and the deepest instincts of the human reason and of the human heart point to a destination beyond this world.

The history of humanity, moreover, in its largest view, both in this world and in the world beyond, enters into another and more comprehensive history still, the history of the universe. Human history is but a part—it may be, must be, a small part—of that grand Universe-drama which is to go on for ever unfolding in the round of eternal ages.

Over this unfolding, the Infinite Mind presides. Not without purpose does the Most High govern the universe; not for nothing; not for the mere sake of governing; not for the sake of any vain-glorious self-display, making Himself the grand Self-Showman of the universe, as some men make Him out to be; but for some end worthy of an infinite, wise, and good God.

Doubt not, then, that the Universe-drama has its plan. It does not roll at random. Its great action is Divinely conducted in its eternal development.

The Providence of God is the Genius of the History of the Universe.

IX. What this all-comprehending Divine purpose is, we should not dare permit ourselves to assert, unless Divinely taught. Still, reason would reasonably suggest it to be the subjugation and final extinction of evil.

Evil exists in the universe of God. We should have to take for granted the Divine wisdom and goodness of its permission, even if we could conceive no reasonable explanation of its origin. In ten thousand things, the undeniable rests upon the inscrutable, and whoever determines to hold nothing for true that is inexplicable, or rests upon an inexplicable ground, will inevitably be driven to have less than one article to his creed. *Omnia exeunt in mysteria*—all things go out into mystery at last. Human science, in its highest result, is always brought face to face with something it can not analyze.

Evil exists; but good and evil are in necessary opposition. And a great struggle between the powers of Good and the powers of Evil, conducted by the Most High Himself, we might not unreasonably assume to be the deepest inmost sense of the history of the universe, and so of the history of hu-

manity. And Christianity seems to represent the "gathering together of all things" into a universe of goodness, unity, and peace, as the all-comprehending end for which the Infinite Father presides over the great drama of the universe.

Subordinate to this, or rather included in it, we might reasonably suppose, and are so instructed, that the special purpose of the Divine intervention in human history is the disciplinary education of the human race, and its advancement toward that full and perfect rational development which man's spiritual constitution makes possible, and after which man's reason and conscience prompt him to strive.

But our little world has been the chosen theatre for an intervention of Divine Providence, which, among all possible interventions, is singular and transcendent—namely, the historical appearance of Jesus Christ, announcing Himself as sent by the Infinite Father, to proclaim and to effect the restoration of fallen humanity, and to establish "the kingdom of God" upon the earth.

We know not *why* this particular method of Divine intervention was chosen, nor can we explain the *how* of its efficacious connection with human restoration. We know that God was bound—we say it reverently, but we say it firmly—God was bound to intervene in human behalf in *some* way; and we

can understand what Jesus Christ propounded as to the origin and object, the motive and end, of this particular method: God's love the motive, human restoration the end. "So God loved the world, that He sent His Son, that the world through Him might be saved."

The historical appearance of Christ is the central fact in the world's history, containing in itself (we know not how) the principle of the union of man with God, by a Divine power, which, through the Divine Spirit, wrought in the heart of humanity in advance of Christ's actual coming, as it has wrought in the ages that have followed.

And not only the principle of the unity of humanity with God, but also of the whole rational universe. Such, at least, may be the meaning of the words of one of the apostles of Jesus—"that in the dispensation of the fullness of time," the Infinite Father "might gather into one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in Him."

So much, then, in fine, for the comprehensive idea of God's Providence in the history of humanity and of the universe, and its all-embracing purpose.

And now, is not this view of a universe thus

watched over, cared for, guarded and guided to its high rational end—is not this view a better one than the dreary spectacle of a universe forced through the ages by fatal forces—it knows not whither nor why—and a passive, inactive, inexorable Looker-on its only God?

Which of the two is the truer Philosophy of the History of the Universe, I leave you to say.

X. It is a stupendous conception—God's universal, all-ordering Providence. Yet reason demands and justifies it, and the heart needs it. Let us hold it fast in the simplicity of an undoubting faith, even though it baffles and confounds the imagination in the attempt to grasp and realize it.

I suppose the sight of the starry heavens, more commonly than any thing else, overwhelms the imagination, and makes the idea of God's particular Providence seem almost too great, too wonderful to be believed. I presume we have all felt this many times, more strongly indeed at some than at other times. I remember the overwhelming impression made upon myself the last time my attention was arrested by the spectacle which a starlit night presents.

I had gone out of doors into the still air of a cloudless, moonless sky. The air was as clear as

clear could be, and not the smallest bit of cloud flecked the sky. The pure blue vault was studded thick with stars; no space but seemed full of them—ten thousand glittering lights. I thought not merely of the wonderful beauty of the sight my eyes took in, but of the more wonderful meaning which the sight revealed to my intelligence: myriads of vast worlds, in the midst of which our little globe is but a floating speck!

And those myriads of worlds which I saw—I thought how small a part they are of those I might see if I should stay out all night, looking as the revolving earth brought new orbs to view, successively rising in the east. Then, too, I thought how the sun hides by day as many stars as the night reveals. Then, too, what myriads of other stars are visible to dwellers in the Southern hemisphere, which I should see if I could put myself there now!

But what are all the stars visible to the naked human eye, compared with those beyond its reach? The telescope brings them to view—immense worlds; suns of other systems glittering in spots where the naked eye sees nothing but the blue void; and every improvement in the telescope brings new orbs to sight. But beyond the reach of my naked eye, or of any telescope man has made or can make, what worlds upon worlds, and systems

upon systems, doubtless, stretch outward through boundless space! Eternity and infinitude give time and room enough for the Great Maker to work in. And what limits can we assign to His work?

And all those worlds—have they their dwellers, too? Doubtless, yes. Do you suppose our little globe, so filled with every form of life, even down to organizations so minute that it takes the strongest microscope to reveal them—do you suppose our little globe is the only abode of organic and of rational life? I do not believe it.

Thus looking and thus thinking, how overwhelming to the imagination becomes the conception of God's all-ordering Providence, embracing all those countless worlds, and all the dwellers in them!

And even when from our little globe we look up to the starry sky, and think only of God's Providence over man, how the words of the poet David spring to our minds, and more impressively to us than they could to him: "When I consider the heavens the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast made, Lord, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him."

Yet Jesus Christ bids us believe in God's fatherly Providence over man. God is love. His Providence over man is a Providence of Love. Love is

the strongest power in the universe, and Jesus Christ Himself, in His own person, is God's heart of Human Love to man. He it is that bids us have faith in God's infinite, fatherly tenderness. He it is that bids us believe that the Father is ever leading us by His own hand through the dark days and bright days, the sorrows and the joys of our earthly pilgrimage, making all things work together for our good.

Let us, then, thankfully believe, firmly trust in, and entirely submit ourselves to the all-ordering Providence of the Living God, the Loving Father of us all.

THE

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

BY

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THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF PRAYER.

"And it came to pass as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples."—Luke 11 : 1.

There are a great many things to which men object, as parts of Christianity, which are not peculiarly parts of it at all. It was not necessary that Christianity should teach men to pray. Prayer is a natural instinct. Men have always prayed, and I suppose always will. The question is: *How* and *to whom* shall they pray?

In any danger or distress of body or soul, men have cried to some invisible power stronger than themselves, stronger than any thing they knew in the world, for deliverance. In famine, in plague, on the approach of enemies whom they were powerless to repel, nations have cried to the invisible powers for safety. And men, as individuals, when pressed by sudden calamity, when sudden death has stared them in the face, upon the midnight seas in wreck and storm, underneath any

sudden stroke, or under conviction of overwhelming sin, when the voice of conscience, that never can be silenced, spake out of the darkness and prophesied woe; have always knelt and cried to the *gods*—the bad gods or the good gods, the gods supernal or the gods infernal, but to some powers unseen. For the conviction that back of all that was visible there lay something invisible, that behind this material world, or beyond it, there lay an awful world of power invisible, this conviction has been in the heart of men from the beginning, and will remain in the heart of men until the end. We need have no fear of that. When men have tried all things by their own power, visible or material, then, in their despair, they have appealed to *the gods*. "Give us this day our daily bread," the Christian prays. An Indian corn dance is the same prayer. It differs but in object. The Indian corn dance, the sacrifice to Pan, were only human nature's dumb instincts appealing to the unseen, to the powers that hold humanity in the hollows of their mighty hands, powers that could save or could destroy—strangely, darkly, but still appealing. There is not, over all this fair earth, a land that has not been dyed with the blood of sacrifice. Men have gone to the gods dyed with the blood of beasts, and asked to be saved; dyed with the blood

of men, and asked to be pardoned; dyed with the blood of their first-born offered to propitiate. The dearest thing they had they offered as their prayer to God. The dying groans of the victim, the agony of the dumb beast, the shriek of slaughtered men, have been man's prayers to the gods above him.

So, when Christ came, the word was not, "Shall we pray?" but, "Lord, teach us *how* to pray;" "Teach us *how* to come to God;" "Teach us how to approach God, and Who God is."

The character of the God determines the character of the prayer. That was in the mind of the disciples and in the mind of the Lord when He taught them a prayer according to their request: "Show us God; tell us what His nature is, and His name, and so shall we know how to approach Him acceptably, and receive good gifts at His hands." Prayer comes to us, therefore, as the natural instinct of man displaying itself on every page of his history; men praying as individuals, or praying as communities, or praying as nations, or praying as churches, but still praying. There has gone up from the earth a ceaseless cry of lamentation and woe, or of thanksgiving and praise to the heavens above.

In speaking to you, therefore, to-night, of the

Christian Doctrine of Prayer, I must look to prayer as it was taught by the Lord Himself, and as prayer comes to us now, Christian men in a Christian land, who have had a Revelation of the Invisible teaching us the nature of God, proclaiming His Fatherhood and man's Sonship.

Of course, I am not to prove the existence of God. I am not speaking to men who believe in the dirt philosophy; I am not speaking, at least I shall not speak, to those who suppose there is nothing beyond what is visible, nothing beyond what is tangible, who suppose there is no ear that can hear, no voice that can answer, no heart that can feel. I speak to those who believe in God, and that God "Our Father," who has an ear to hear, a hand to save, a heart to feel.

And from that point of view, I am met with this objection: "God is unchangeable: how can our prayers change the unchangeable?"

Now, the unchangeableness of God is of the very essence of our faith. Christianity, first of all, reveals it. We must accept the responsibility of a God that changes not; that alters not nor wearies. The Unchangeable for ever and for ever is our God and Father. Now, how with such a God shall we come to pray? We bring our petitions before Him; we ask Him for pardon or ask Him

for bread. We ask Him for deliverance from some woe; we ask Him for salvation from some bodily, mental, spiritual pain. God has brought it on us—at least it has come by His law. He has at least permitted it. Do we ask Him to change? "How can man's feeble words change God?" The answer is: There is an entire mistake. No Christian man prays, expecting to change God. No prayer that was ever offered with the expectation that God would either repent or change was a Christian prayer. God is unchangeable. That is the very first thought. If God be captious, if God be changeable, if God be open to flattery, open to *any* propitiation, open to feel lovingly toward me to-day, and open to hating me to-morrow, how can I pray to a God that veers as the winds veer, that changes as the tides change? No. The very God we need to pray to is a God unchangeable. For it is not that I seek to change God by prayer; but quite another thing, my relation toward God; and that change is effected not by changing God, who is not changeable, but by changing myself. God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself!

You stand some day on a plain, and there rises in the distance a mountain—a single peak, let us say, as you can sometimes see them on our own broad plains in the West. You pass a day's jour-

ney with that mountain in your sight. At every hour of your journey, your relation to the mountain changes; the mountain still stands just the same. You approach it on the one side, and as you look at it, it lifts to the blue above rugged peaks, splintered by the lightnings, worn with the storms, glittering underneath the sunlight, flashing in the pallid moonbeams, daily and nightly. The shadow falls on you as you stand if the sun is beyond, and you are in the coolness. You pass on and around, and on another side the hot sun beats down upon you. You are footsore, dusty, thirsty, weary. On that side, no brook comes down, no springs flash out. It is a hard, barren waste. You go on still to another slope. The forest grows up, covering the shaggy sides with greenness, and there in the shadow of the woods the rivulets steal downward through the clefts to the brimming river in the valley, and you stoop and drink, and are refreshed. So, as you journey hour by hour, you may change your relation to the mountain, and at no two points that you occupy will the mountain be just the same to you. You have seen it on different sides, you have borne different relations to it, you have climbed its rocky sides, you have been cold upon its snowy summit, you have rested in its cool shadow, you have been protected from the storm by

its caves. But *you* changed—the rooted mountain still remained the same.

Or, again, the sun above our heads, the best image of the unchangeable we know, the chosen type of the Lord Himself, sets and rises to *the man*. It never sets and never rises to itself. You see it to-day through the watery vapors of the winter-time; another day, again, you see it blazing down from the zenith in a hot August noon. You see it sink slowly to its rest at evening; at morning, flaming in the eastern skies, now lurid through mists, now blazing in the vaporless blue. We call these changes, changes in the sun, and yet the great sun always, day and night, in storm or calm, at rising or at setting, has not changed. You change, your atmosphere changes, your little world changes, and the relation is changed; but the sun never.

Now, to bring a change in relation between God and man, one of the beings being changeless, you must change the other. Man must alter the relation by altering himself; and that relation is certainly one thing in prayer and another thing without it.

You can reduce it, if you will, to a mathematical formula. The relation between God and man, *minus* prayer, you can represent by what figure

you please; but however you choose to represent it, it will make no equation with the other statement of the relation of God to man *plus* prayer, God remaining still the unchanged quantity in your calculation. God unalterable, the varying man varies the relation. The man *with* prayer must stand in one relation to God; the man *without* prayer in quite another. There is the difference.

You may shut yourself in a cellar in June, if you will, and the bright sun above you shall send no ray down to *you*. So you may roof yourself in from God's grace, if you will; but God's grace still descends, just the same. You may cover your garden-bed from the dews of night if you please; but the dews of night descend all the same. So, again, you may cover yourself from the dews of God's grace and blessing; you may turn away from His good gifts, shut your heart to God, and yet God's grace goes over all the world, God's good gifts are everywhere given, God's pity falls like the sunlight, His mercy comes like the rain, His blessings are showered on good and ill alike. God's gifts fall on the unchristian, on the sinful, as the Lord teaches us, on the just and the unjust alike. The question is for the man himself. Shall he take or shall he refuse; shall he cover himself from God's goodness, or shall he open his heart to it?

So we pass that. It is an entire mistake to suppose that we seek to change the unchangeable God.

Prayer is changing man's relations to God. But prayer is not only asking for what we need, which is the heathen idea. It is far more than that. It is a positive communion with God. You can not describe Christian prayer, as has been attempted, by any comparison with the cry of a dumb animal when seized to his death. Christian prayer is not the cry of wild distress, nor the last shriek from a man's lips as he goes down in the darkness choked by the foam; nor the cry as he yields up his breath in battle; nor the groan for mercy as the sinner tosses on a bed of pain; a prelude, as his conscience prophesies, of a bed of pain for ever. Christian prayer is a changing of the relation, as I have described by a man's putting himself in a certain position toward God. It embraces communion, praise, thanksgiving, as well as prayer. It is standing toward God, and looking to Him as a Father and a Friend. It is coming to Him, and opening the heart to Him, exposing all its feelings to Him, speaking out every difficulty, laying it fairly before Him, consulting Him upon it, taking Him into one's confidence, as you could not take your best friend.

God represents Himself, as He is, all-powerful and all-wise, Lord and Father, and His palace-doors are open day and night, and ushers have orders to admit through all the shining hosts into the very presence-chamber of the King, at any hour they may come, those children of His that seek Him, and who shall find Him neither occupied with business nor taken up with the government of the world. They may come there and talk with God, as it were, as one talks to his friend and benefactor.

That is Christian prayer. It calls out the intellect; it calls out the affections; it calls out the most strenuous exertions of the human will; it calls out every power that gives dignity to man.

You say, "We see all this, and we grant the subjective use and value of prayer. You will say nothing more than is safe when you say that the man that prays must be a man who lives on a loftier plane than the man who does not pray; that the man who is in the habit of going to God in this way, and communing with Him, talking with Him, face to face, that he must be a nobler man, intellectually and morally, than the man that does not pray; and it were worth while to keep up prayer, and public worship, and private worship; worth while to encourage men to pray, if only for this result in educating and elevating man."

"But is there any thing beyond that? Is it, after all, any thing more than a subjective exercise, and does it bring any thing more than a subjective, ennobling, and lifting up of the soul, raising it above the chances and changes of life? Is it possible for God really to *give* what a man asks?" It is manifest that on the answer to that question must turn, after all, the whole value of prayer, because it is impossible that for any long period of time, one man, or any number of men, should keep up the habit of praying, going through the form of presenting petitions to a Being that can not answer. It is the very conviction that God does answer that makes the subjective effect of prayer possible. The elevation of the heart that comes from praying comes because men believe that God hears prayer and answers prayer. If men did not believe that, they would stop praying, and the subjective benefit would go. We will not conceal, we ought not to conceal, the fact that in our day, men have found difficulty in believing that God hears and answers prayer. While they are ready to admit a God and a just God and a merciful God, they also have imagined that that God was so fettered that He could not answer the prayers of His creatures; that, at least, one whole class of prayers are useless. While we may ask Him for spiritual bless-

ings, for forgiveness of our sins, for strength to resist temptation, yet when we go beyond that and ask God for rain, for instance, we are asking something which God can not supply.

Let us examine this. The ground of the objection is, the Unchangeableness of Law. In our day, in the discoveries that we have made, the conviction has come, beyond what it was in any previous age, that the entire realm of nature is subject to no caprice, to no chance, subject really to no change, but subject only to the strong arm of *law*. We have examined the paths far enough to know, and to feel safe in saying, that those which we have not examined yet, the outlying realms of Nature, being a part of Nature, are as much under law as are those we have examined; that there is not a dew-drop formed and falling, not a rain-drop that descends upon a thirsty field, that does not come by law; not a cloud, not a hazy vapor that drifts across the sky, but moves by law; not a single change in temperature, in the atmosphere about us, but comes by law. If we have not found the laws yet, if we have not been able to tabulate and formulate and systematize, yet, nevertheless, the law is there. The objection is that when we ask God for certain blessings of body, for rain, for instance, or for the gift of health, or for a prosperous voyage at sea, or

for deliverance from plague or storm, *we are asking God to change His law.*

Now, as a Christian accepts the unchangeableness of God as one basis for Prayer, so, also, must he accept the unchangeableness of Law as another basis for Prayer. If you give him a world of chance, a world where things go by caprices, then he can no more pray with any hope of being answered than he can pray to a capricious God. He must have a basis of fixed law to stand upon, or he can not pray.

This other objection turns itself, as we shall find when we examine it, into one of the very grounds on which prayer stands. For what is Law? A very few moments' careful thought will show any man that law is not a power, it is merely the formula by which we express the action of a power. We see certain causes produce certain effects uniformly; we say it is the law that the cause should be followed by the effect. We put down the law, we formulate it; but the law is not the power. There is no *power* that we know of at all in Nature; but when there is Unity of Law (and our Science is teaching us that very fact), that presupposes and takes for granted Unity also of Power. This power that acts, and acts in these ways, acts in a method which we tabulate and formulate, and

call law, is *what?* Well, Science does not know! It deals with *phenomena*, and can deal with nothing else. It deals with what you can see and handle and analyze. Powers escape it, and escape it utterly. There is no knowledge except of the things we see. Appearances, *phenomena* are all that Science deals with, and our best wisdom in Science has been in our modern days, to know that fact and accept it. In the old days, men sought to break through the walls of the material and get out into the broad ocean beyond; and instead of searching what they could, examining what was in their hands, and discovering what was near, they went far reaches to discover the undiscoverable, to comprehend the incomprehensible, to find what can not be found. So, their science was limited, their advance was checked. Not until

> "The broad-browed Verulam,
> The first of those who know,"

taught men to be content with their own smallness, content to sit down inside their own walls as humble interpreters of Nature, have we been able to advance in real Science, and make progress in genuine knowledge. That progress has been made by the acceptance of the fact that *phenomena* are all we can know; the *power* lies behind. It

was to that power the heathen cried. It is to that power, men always instinctively cry in their last distress. The Christian names that power, God—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the power that moves and rules; and when we talk of law, we mean simply God's orderly working, that is all: the way in which God rules His great household, the regular order He has established for His worlds. The father in his house may to-day establish a certain set of rules: at such an hour there will be the morning, at such an hour the mid-day, at such an hour the evening meal, at such an hour the child shall go to bed, at such an hour he shall rise, at such an hour he shall take his bath, at such an hour he shall have his lessons. The father may arrange all that, and that is *the Law*. But the child would make a mistake—a mistake made sometimes by men called philosophers—should he imagine that those laws were laws for the father, binding the father as well as binding him; if he mistake the order by which the father governs his household for a power outside the father. Law sits enthroned in the bosom of God. There is her eternal home, and she expresses herself throughout all nature, the voice of God. The planets move in their mighty courses by law; the green grass-blades spring up in the spring days by law; the

tide sweeps inward from the sea and thunders up the quaking sands by law. By law the constellations flame and burn; the little firefly dances in the summer evening and emits his gleaming spark by law. Law rules everywhere, man's body and man's soul, and in the mighty arms of law, man rests secure. We do not depreciate law; we do not seek to make it at all uncertain; we only declare it to be the expression of God's will—not superior to God, but the handmaid of God.

Of that law, we see only a part; we can not see how its enactments modify and arrange themselves. But even we can bring down a higher law and suspend a lower.

There are, for instance, the laws of chemistry and the laws of vitality—one evidently a law of a higher nature, and the other of a lower. Now, whenever the two touch, the laws of vitality will invariably modify and sometimes suspend the laws of chemistry. You may, for instance, subject a living body to a heat which will actually destroy the texture of a dead body. A man may sit in an atmosphere raised to a point which will boil dead flesh, and may do it as a means of health; it is done daily. Again, man by his will suspends the laws, as we call them, of mere matter. I never lift my hand without suspending the law of gravitation.

I annihilate for the time being the law as far as my hand is concerned.

We must recognize this fact, that there are these grades of law, and that the higher law when it impinges upon the lower either changes it by modification, or suspends it for the time being entirely. When, therefore, one says God can not answer prayer, because He will break His own law in a particular case, he is speaking too shallow a thought. Take, for instance, the very matter of rain, of which I have spoken. It has been said that if God should send a shower at the request of a particular neighborhood, He could not do it without deranging the balance of the world, and, in consequence, the balance of the Universe. Well, suppose not. What of it? Is it not in God's power to suspend a lower law, since I can do it? I can not build a house; I can not put a brick in its place in the wall; I can not lift a stone into a tower; I can not build or launch a ship; I can not fell a tree; I can not drain a marsh; I can not dig a canal; I can not grade a railroad; I can not take a stone and cast it into the sea, without *changing the whole balance of the Universe.* We are doing it every day; men are all the time doing it, and have been since the world was created. Displace one particle of matter, and you change the balance—not perceptibly, indeed,

but science will tell you clearly you do. Cast a stone into the air, and the stone attracts the earth, and the earth attracts the stone; the earth is jarred from its orbit by the act of casting that stone into the atmosphere. Boys do it at play, and it never occurs to them that they are in any danger whatever of disarranging the Universe. The very water that we are supplied with in this city is supplied by a breach of the law of fluids. We have deliberately set to work and suspended a law as far as the Croton supply is concerned; we have lifted the water up and beyond where it belongs.

In other words, Will itself is a law; personal will is a fact that you can not leave out of account. God can not send showers in answer to prayer, one says, and yet they tell us that we can bring out cannon and powder, and burn powder enough in our cannon to produce a shower anywhere. After every great battle of modern days, where there has been sufficient artillery discharged, there is always a shower, they say. If man can bring a shower, or a storm of wind and lightning and thunder and rain to any spot, it surely is a strange notion of God's sovereignty over His universe to suppose that He can not do as much as we can without endangering His universe.

But we will leave that and take up another ob-

jection. It has been said that God could not answer one man's prayer without interfering with another man's good. For instance, two nations are at war; both of them are praying for victory; God can not give to one a victory without denying it to the other; therefore it is best to suppose that God answers neither, but lets the case be decided by the most powerful artillery and the strongest battalions.

Now, is there any real difficulty in this case? It only comes, the supposed difficulty, from a misapprehension of what prayer really is. Not the asking or demanding of something for one's self without terms, but the asking of it subject always to the will of the Moral Governor of the Universe—that is prayer. What man asks, he asks always under a broad law, and that broad law of God's is the good of all men and of all creation. When I ask for rain on my land, I ask it on the express condition that God shall give it if it seems to Him best and wisest. When a nation asks God for victory, it asks for that victory on condition that its cause be good, that its aims be just, that the preservation and safety and victory of that land and its armies be for the glory of God, for the bringing forth of His Kingdom, for the benefit of His Creatures, for the good of all the World. This

is the law of prayer, as the Lord expressed it in Gethsemane, kneeling in his agony, and praying that the cup might pass from Him, "and yet not my will, but thine be done."

Another objection is, and that has been put in familiar shape, that there is no tangible result to prayer, that there never has been, and there never can be; that, as a factor, producing results in the world, we must leave it out of the account. Tyndall's Prayer-Test you will remember. He proposed to try prayer scientifically, to put two sets of sick people in two different wards of a hospital, and for one of them prescribe calomel and quinine, or whatsoever might be necessary in the way of drugs, *and* prayer, to be taken regularly. In the other ward to prescribe calomel, quinine, and other things, and leave out prayer. In the end, to look over the patients, and see whether the omission of prayer from the medical prescription had any effect at all on the cure. That is what it practically amounted to. I would take just here, also, the very baldest ground, and do that also on a scientific basis. I say that since the world began, men have prayed; I say that is a fact, just as much a fact as that men have eaten or clothed themselves. From all quarters of this world have gone up appeals to Heaven. The

ery is to God; the prayer is for deliverance or safety, from the creation until to-night.

Now, am I, as a scientific man, to leave all that out, to leave out of my account and calculation one fixed phenomenon of human life? Why, on the barest Positive Philosophy, I must take facts as they are; and prayer is a fact, a fact of life, a persistent fact, a universal fact, a steady fact, always there. Shall I find no place for this fact? Shall I say that the world has had no results from that, that to-day the world would have been what it is, had there been no prayer? Is that scientific, to rule out this great phenomenon of life, and say the result would have been just the same without it? Why, on the baldest, barest, and merest materialism, on a cold scientific treatment of the subject, it would be unphilosophical in me to take any such ground as that. The world of the nineteenth century is the result of powers that have worked in the world since the first—powers that have disappeared sometimes, and phenomena that have ruled and gone; but we must take them all into account to explain the world as it is, and we must take this. Just see how impossible it would be otherwise. Take the case of the sick people. How is it possible to take twenty sick people, and shut them up in the ward of a hospital outside of prayer? You may build a roof over them

to shelter them from the sun or the rain, but you can not roof them in from prayer. Why, I pray for the sick every day these Lent days; we are praying in all our churches for the sick all the world over. Can we put in a parenthesis and say that we omit from our prayer those sick people on whom Dr. Thomson and Prof. Tyndall are trying their experiments? All we know is, that prayer is a factor of human life itself, as eating, drinking, thinking, reading, and working are factors of human life, and a universal factor, from which no man can be excluded, from whose effects you can shut in no man.

But as to God's giving us blessings material in answer to prayer, there is this further thought to a man who believes in law: when he looks philosophically at the phenomenon of prayer, the universal exercise of prayer, and then sees God's blessings come, and how they come, sees sudden deliverances, sees unexpected good, sees health restored where all science prophesied death, sees life given when the feet were already on the crumbling brink of the grave, sees strange "chances," as we call them, come to men, sees wonderful deliverances wrought, what is his thought? That this phenomenon of prayer is a part of the universal law; that God takes that into account as all the rest; that God is a God

that will be entreated; that He has planted the instinct in the heart of man to go back to the same source from which he came; that He Himself made prayer, when man was made, a part of man's nature and law.

And so, looking over the world, we can not tell, Is it prayer that produced this, or is it not? This power is like all other powers—*invisible*. "All things," the old School-men said, "go out into mystery." So goes prayer. You can not gauge it: you can not measure it; it belongs to the unseen forces.

The results produced by prayer, that they exist, that they are strange, that they are wonderful, I have the philosophic right to assume. All the expressions of power in the world seen are expressions of a power that lies behind, unknown, and as yet, to us, unapproachable, except through prayer.

We trace to its ends the manifestation of Power, to the last particle or atom the manifestation of Force. There it escapes us, and we are lost.

We take, then, the Christian philosophy of existence, that the material clothes the immaterial; that the world visible is the expression only of the world invisible; that the body is simply the clothing of the soul. As we believe in free men, we believe in a free God. Let us take our Lord's own words:

"If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good gifts to them that ask him."

Science confesses itself ignorant of all, save *phenomena*. The great deeps of Life and Power lie unsounded. Knowledge deals with shows, Faith with substances and realities. Where Science stops, Revelation takes us up. A Will, a Person, a Heart lie behind *phenomena*. Out of the roar of the tempest, out of the crowding evil, out of the iron clasp of pitiless and senseless matter, and its apparent power, we appeal to Wisdom, Will, and Goodness, and *pray*, exercising "the right of petition," which belongs to Humanity in the way the Lord taught us—

> "For what are men better than sheep or goats,
> Which nourish a blind life within the brain,
> If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer,
> Both for themselves, and those who call them friend.
> For so, the whole round earth is, every way,
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

AND

PHYSICAL LAW.

BY

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MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PHYSICAL LAW.

"Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God can not be tempted, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed."—St. James 2 : 13, 14.

It is the reasonable faith of Christian men, my friends, that while the world of nature and mind is open to our searching, there are truths essential to our duty, which are planted by our Maker in the conscience of all, and can not be shaken by the speculative strifes of the time. Science may pry into its nebulous fields, but the fixed stars give their unchanging light. In that conviction, I have chosen this old question of moral responsibility, as it bears on certain theories of natural law, which are to-day put forth as the newest fruit of our research. I honor science, so long as it is what the master of experimental philosophy claimed, the interpreter of nature, and I gladly accept all it has revealed of the secrets of life; but when it so treads beyond its own sphere as to deny any reality above nature, and to

change man into the slave of physical forces, it is wise for us to learn a nobler knowledge than can be gained by the dissecting-knife or the microscope. If there be any whom I can thus help toward the study of their own consciences, and that Christian faith which is linked most closely with this moral truth, I shall be glad indeed.

In this view, I offer you a sentence from the epistle of James, which gives us the guiding line of all Christian teaching on this subject. These words may have been written for Jewish converts, who clung to the Pharisaic dogma that suffering was the penalty of inherited sin; or as a rebuke to some who excused their apostasy on the plea of irresistible temptation. But our apostle answers with plain logic that to call sin fatality is to call God its author, and to belie our own self-knowledge. Here, then, we have set before us the one only method in which we can study aright the problem of moral evil. It is in the fact of responsibility as revealed in our own consciences. And it is, when any class of thinkers has lost sight of this personal truth, and reasoned from purely theoretical views of the nature of God or of human life, that the system of necessity has arisen. There are two results, to one of which such a theory has always led. The theolog-

ical view has traced the ground of evil to the eternal decrees of God, and has made man its necessary inheritor, while it has contradicted itself by calling him responsible. The philosophic school, from the same starting-point, has more logically affirmed that there is no moral evil at all. That falsehood has appeared sometimes in an ideal pantheism like that of Spinoza; sometimes in the guise of physical law. I do not linger on the more abstract systems. It is enough if I show you their common ground. Let men lose the moral fact of accountability, and whatever their religious faith, they must end in one shape or another of fatalism. Nor do I hesitate to say that the revolting doctrine so often taught from Christian pulpits has gone far toward the growth of the modern materialism. It was the saying of Plutarch, the devoutest of heathen, that he would rather believe in no God than in a Saturn, who ate his own children; and it is not strange, when men have been called the victims of a hopeless and helpless destiny, that they should deny any responsibility at all. Yet as we are in little danger to-day of that harsh creed, and much more of the plausible fatalism which wears the name of science, I shall turn directly to the field of modern inquiry.

I state, then, at once the line of our argument. It is my purpose to show from experience that

our responsibility for our actions is an acknowledged fact; and that in this fact there is given us the assurance of a moral law, and of our power of choice. We meet here, at the threshold, our champions of necessity. They claim that throughout the universe, in every form of inorganic or organic life, in crystal or plant, in the instinct of the brute, or the mechanism of our own bodies, there is a sure, irresistible law; and thus in the soul of man, if we may use so old-fashioned and unscientific a word, is found the same unvarying order. Our minds are but a function of the gray matter of the brain; "without phosphorus no thought," in the phrase of a modern sage; and what our shallow morality has dreamed of as will is nothing but a passive obedience to our desires. Such is the claim I would examine by the clearest test. Our positive science is wont to boast that it rests on fact, and turns away with impatient scorn from speculative reasoning. I do not doubt that the rebuke is sometimes just; and if there be a truth I wish most to urge, it is that we are not to spin cobwebs here out of the bowels of theology, but to deal with realities. I accept the challenge, and shall leave it to you to judge whether the Christian moralist or these practical sages are the theorists. What, then, is the character of these facts which

we are to examine? I beg your special attention to this point, for it involves the whole inquiry. It is the method of our champions of physical necessity to reason from the cases of natural weakness, or of social disorder, where the question of responsibility becomes obscure, to the conclusion that there is no freedom. Yet that is to take for granted the whole question. Hereafter, we are to consider these darker sides of the subject; but at the outset, we are not talking of idiots, or insane, or diseased, or undeveloped minds, but of a knowledge within the reach of every intelligent man. We turn, then, to this evidence of the social conscience. There are certain laws of action, not notions of your mind or mine, but recognized by all in daily life. We use the words merit, demerit, approbation, shame, remorse, in our common speech, and they stand for a reality as clear, as undoubted, as when we speak of a metal or an earth. It is by these we judge of the character of men, and are judged in turn. Take any out of a thousand examples. What is merit? A man has risked his life for the protection of a fellow-man in the midst of a plague, while thousands sought their own safety; and the verdict of all pronounces it an act of unselfish nobleness. You have sacrificed your chances of wealth or office in the

discharge of an honorable duty. Your own conscience witnesses to the character of the deed, that it is not like a pleasure of the palate, or even of intellectual effort; but purer, sweeter, higher than all; the happiness of fulfilling the law of right. What is demerit? You have wronged an innocent man in a moment of selfish passion; you have shrunk from the defense of a just cause through fear of losing your reputation. The verdict of the common conscience condemns you; and when you awaken from your self-delusion, you feel a shame at your own act. Analyze now these judgments of the moral faculty. Each witnesses an obligation, and with it a responsibility. There could be no merit or demerit if there were no choice. A stone feels no remorse when it crushes a man; a brute feels no remorse when he tears his victim. We feel regret, but no remorse, when we have done an injury without design. If we were creatures who must obey a reigning desire, where could be the difference between duty and impulse, virtue and lust? All these would be empty names. I shall be met here by the old cavil, that this standard of right and wrong varies with different times and races, and therefore all these are notions of our education. But I reply that the variation does not disprove the principle. It is allowed by those who deny any innate ideas

of morality, that education leads always to agreement in regard to the laws of moral action; and this is to admit all we seek. There are thousands who will lie, or steal, or kill, and there is sophistry enough as to the decision of special cases; but lying, theft, and murder are wrongs in every code. Education develops conscience, but it can not create it. The child can not judge of distance save by experience; but the faculty of eyesight is the gift of nature. It is enough that I rest the evidence there. But if there be, beyond such moralists who differ from us only in words, any who really claim that there can be no higher law than that of our sensual desires, I do not reason with them; I leave them to their brutishness, and content myself with the decision of the social conscience.

In this witness of our real experience, we reach the knowledge of what we mean by moral law. This principle of responsibility reveals to us that there is an order higher than that of the physical world. And thus we lay the axe at the root of that pretended science of nature which denies our freedom, on the ground that we are subjects of the same omnipotent power, whether it act more coarsely in the crystal, or more cunningly in the nervous filaments of the brain; that our will is only the seeming choice of a creature, who can not act without

motive, and that motive always the strongest passion. It is from an utter denial of the moral facts we have studied that the error springs. We admit that no creature is independent on law; but we affirm that, of the very character of moral law, it is not a compulsory power as in nature; it is a power that pervades, influences, warns, yet is and must be determined by our personal choice. Let us turn to a few examples, which will prove more than all general reasoning. I will take my illustration, first, from the striking law of the magnetic needle. You know the marvelous power by which the bit of steel within the box points the seaman through the darkness to the unchanging pole; and some of you may have studied the principle of its variations, so puzzling to the mariner in former days, as he steered through unknown seas, and found his faithful guide seemingly untrue; yet now the variations are known to be only a part of the same law. Compare the physical fact with the moral. We often use this illustration of the power of conscience, as it points to the polestar of duty; but we must not in the image forget the greater contrast. I will take the example of a man of sincere moral feeling, yet in whom a self-indulgent habit has at times weakened the might of conscience; I will suppose him in one of those critical hours

such as come to most of us in half-formed youth, tempted by the love of pleasure or by evil associates to sensual crime; it is a fearful struggle, for he knows the right, he recognizes the danger, the motives of true action, but the allurement is strong; he wavers, he pauses, but at last with one mighty effort and a prayer for divine help, he says, "I will not yield to sin." Analyze now this act of the will. Was the force that shook his better desire like that which sways the needle? Was the motion that at last conquered, a compulsion? Was the law of duty variable under certain conditions, as the oscillation of the magnet is determined by the pole? To ask this is to show you the difference between physical and moral power.

But consider another case, where you perceive a more subtle natural force—that of chemical affinity. You shall take two cups of hydrochloric and nitric acid, in which some gold has been immersed; each remains inert; but mix them, and the gold combines at once with the chlorine. What is this force? Has the chlorine any moral choice of the metal? Turn now to another case of affinity for gold. A man has grown in the selfish lust of gain for years, yet thus far he has done no act of dishonesty; his moral capacity has remained partly inert, as the

acids before the mixture; but by and by some cup of business chances is suddenly thrown into his grasping life; a grand fortune is offered to his covetous heart, if he will only take the risk of a fraud; he may have some slight twinges of conscience, but they vanish before the bait. What, now, is the motive that decides his act? Is the affinity for the gold an irresistible law, like that of the acid? Surely I need not say that to talk of necessity here is absurd. His lust is the product of his own self-nourished habit, and he is responsible for the guilt. Such illustrations can be multiplied without end. Each of us has known in his experience these battles of the selfish passions with the law of conscience; and it is useless to reason them away by any bewildering talk of natural disease or vicious education. We fix our thought on these plain facts of our daily life, and we ask, What do they prove? They prove that the whole argument by which the necessitarian claims that we are subject to moral as to physical law is based on an utter misconception. Natural force and moral force are essentially unlike. Natural force acts without choice; moral force in and with it. Natural force compels; moral force persuades. Natural force never fails under given conditions; moral force always depends on the personal man. It does not matter whether the theology

of Edwards or the psychology of Bain affirm that, because we can not act without motives, our will must obey the motive. There is no such thing as a necessary motive. You may as well talk of a square circle. "Appetite," in the words of Hooker, "is the mind's solicitor, the will is the mind's controller."

If then, my friends, I have so made the truth clear by these illustrations, that you can see the root of all sophistry on this subject, I may sum it in a word. This is the law of responsibility. This, and this alone, gives you your nobleness above all lower creatures, as capable of moral growth. If there be no such responsibility, there is no real difference between sensual lust and purity, between self-indulgence and self-sacrifice, no motive for duty, no purpose in education, no standard of character, no room for love, or honor, or justice, or goodness, and no social law save force. But if this power be in us, then we have in our freedom a law as mighty as that which sways the tides of the sea, yet far nobler, because it acts from within, and is seated in the personality of the man. We rise here to the sacred truth which the religion of Christ declares. It is in God we see the law, that is perfect freedom. He is bound by the necessity of His holiness; He can never deny Himself; yet in the fullest meaning of that word, He is a law unto Himself, unfet-

tered in His moral choice. And thus, although, as sinful beings, we can not claim that freedom, yet, as Augustine has said in his stately treatise on the will, even in our sin we recognize this moral capacity; our sin is not our nature, but the defect of our nature; we are made for the willing choice of holiness, and as we live in obedience to His law, we grow toward the state where our liberty becomes an inward, abiding character.

Pardon me, my friends, if I have dwelt too long on this more abstract view, for it was essential to fix the truth firmly at the outset. We have studied the evidence of conscience; we are now to study it in the experience of real life. We are born with this mental and moral constitution into a world where we find certain conditions of our growth. We inherit, first of all, a nature derived, in body and mind, through the long line of our parentage, and so affected by its influence, that the seeds of genius or of mental weakness, the infinite shades of our disposition, are an inevitable birthright. Not only the book of revelation, but even that science which scouts Christian truth, confirms in the fresh light of its researches the doctrine of original sin, the great race-fact of the mental, moral, and physical disease that taints the body of humanity. Let me indeed be clearly understood. I

do not confound with such a truth that notion of total depravity, a nature without a single unselfish affection, a single capacity of good, in which a false theology and the fatalism we now examine agree. No, I maintain the view which conscience as well as Scripture witnesses, that evil is not our nature, but only the disease of our true nature, through which we are to pass by the purifying power of God into our nobler condition. But, again, it is not only by this inheritance of birth we are affected; we are to a vast degree shaped, in the whole process of our life, by the law of social circumstance. Climate, soil, education, have their influence on the man, and none can escape these conditions. To one, his existence from infancy is in the luxury of a palace, to another a battle with poverty; one is a savage in his wilds, another is nursed in the arts of refined civilization; one has the pure training of a Christian home, another has grown up in the dens of vice.

What bearing have these facts, then, on our moral responsibility? None is so absurd as to doubt that they have much to do with the formation of the man. But this is not the question. Do they annihilate moral freedom? This is the position of the fatalist. Is it true? To suppose it, is to deny our experience, as he has already denied conscience. Each of us, whatever the elements that have gone

into his being, is an individual person. His personality is seated in his will, and life is the condition of his activity. This is the very constitution of a moral creature, that he should be placed in a state where he can find the growth he needs; and none can conceive of growth without it. We may imagine an ideal world, where there are no diseases to blight the body and no temptations to vex the peace of its sinless dwellers; but this earth, with its mingled sunshine and storm, its tropic bloom, yet its rocky soil that provokes labor, its gold and iron that must be digged from the bowels of the mine—this is the home of human creatures. None of us fails to recognize this fact in material or mental activity. The brute can never pass beyond the limits of climate and zone that define his place in nature. But the highest achievements of man are earned in the battle with natural forces. What gives the hardy farmer of New-England his manhood above the Cingalese who eats his bread-fruit, and lies in the sun, but this need of struggle? Who have won such triumphs in the sphere of intellectual toil as the men who have wrestled with the stern hindrances of early years? What is the life of man from birth to death but this resistance of the vital unit against the elements, that always tend to decompose it? But it is surely a nobler example of

the same law we recognize in our moral progress. That axiom of the master of science, "Nature is conquered by obeying it," only reaches its highest meaning in the sphere of our spiritual struggle. Sin has entered into the world by the condition of our freedom, and its manifold, accumulated forms have left their curse on the history of the race. Yet there is no fatality in this. It is the best proof that a divine Providence, not fate, orders the life of man, since by the same constitution which entails disease, insanity, vicious dispositions, we inherit also the germs of intellect and moral power. We do not charge on God or nature what is the product of our own self-will; nay, we rejoice that in His goodness the diseases and hindrances of nature become the conditions of our holiness. Our lot does not infringe on the fact of personal responsibility; it quickens, it strengthens it; it teaches what human life is meant to teach, that we are placed in a state where, if we strive with faith and energy, we work with Him who brings good out of all evil. Am I not speaking here of facts all recognize? Is there a single virtue that has not been the fruit of such struggle? Is there a single natural infirmity that has not been changed into a noble quality? Are not the highest examples of purity, of courage, of self-sacrifice among those who

have wrestled with their own passions and the evil world? If it be not so, then our life is a riddle, and holiness a dream.

In this light, we reach the fullness of the truth which the Gospel of Christ reveals of the nature of our obligation and the promise of a divine grace. We are free, but such is our constitution that our freedom must pass by degrees, according to our use or our abuse, into a settled state of the character. We are free; but we are not left alone in our life of struggle. There is a Holy Spirit, the source of all wisdom and strength, in whom we live and have our being; and if we act in obedience to His laws, we are in harmony with His co-working grace, as the single wave moves with the tides of the ocean. This is the promise on which we rest, Christian believers! This is the sacred truth that we hold when we adore God, our Father, our Redeemer, our Sanctifier! But it is a truth alike for our warning. If we surrender to the temptation of our selfish passions and of the world around us, we pass at length into the slavery of nature; our desires become our masters, our evil habits become fastened on us; and as we quench the spirit who waits on every conscience, we lose the power of recovery. No arbitrary act of God hardens the heart; but it is left, if we persist in sin, to its own hardening.

Read here that law of moral physiology, so fearfully portrayed by the apostle, deeper and worthier of our study than the structure of these bodies; that personal law which every man must know in the growth of his own character, which vindicates for ever the love of God, and leaves us alone in the consciousness of our responsibility; that law in whose light we trace, step by step, the whole long process of wrong, as the naturalist traces the embryo of the reptile through its wondrous changes. "Lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin, and sin, when it is finished"—fearful word, that reveals the meaning of a future life, as no arbitrary allotment, but the ripening of the seed sown here and now within us!—"when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Such, my friends, is the truth I have endeavored to make clear by the witness both of conscience and experience. And now, with this full light, we may turn, in conclusion, to those mysteries of life which darken so many minds. I have hitherto postponed such cases, because I believe that all error on this subject comes from the science that gropes in the penumbra of social history until it loses its moral eyesight. It is from what is called an induction from two classes of facts—those of constitutional disease and vicious education—that our modern fatalism is

drawn. We must look fairly at all such facts, nor need we soften a single shade in the picture. There can be no question that with each generation of civilized life there have grown more complex forms of mental and moral malady; and that our riper inquiry has discovered much beyond the knowledge of the past. Here, then, the naturalist finds room for his plausible theory. According to the view of one popular school, which has been largely accepted, the mental and moral powers have their determination in the structure of the skull. A murderer is born with the organ of combativeness, and a thief with acquisitiveness in such excess, coupled with the small development of reverence or social affection, that there could be no escape from crime. It has been affirmed, again, by eminent physiologists, that the germs of every vice are to be found in some native derangement of the functions; and the lines severing the physical from the moral are in most cases so blurred as to make any clear distinction impossible. All crime is monomania, and all are in a degree monomaniacs. One kleptomaniac, to use the scientific name which has taken the place of the vulgar word thief, filches rings or old shoes, and another the gold in the bank-vault. One poisons a family, and another butchers his own children. We have the conclusion in the saying of a master

of the same school, that when our legislation has become true science, it will treat all criminals as innocent victims of physical defect.

What, then, shall we think of such opinions as these? They have been advanced on the authority of men of professed learning, and we should willingly extract whatever kernel of truth may be in them. We do not doubt the fact and the variety of such disease. We rejoice that many cases of physical infirmity, once treated with cruelty, are now submitted to the milder discipline of the hospital. Our knowledge of sanitary laws has improved our criminal jurisprudence; nor do I doubt that it has quickened our faith in the principles of Christian reform rather than the religion of the jail and the gibbet. But it is one thing to admit all such cases in their utmost extent, and quite another to infer that the bulk of mankind is irresponsible. We do not punish the idiot or the insane; but we know that the social community is not made up of idiots or insane. We are all aware of the influence of our physical state on our mental and moral action; we know that a dyspepsia may give us gloomy views of life, and a fit of the gout may make us less good-natured Christians than our wont; nay, we may even find some truth in the theory of an ingenious humorist,

that it may depend on the biliary duct whether we are inclined to a Calvinistic theology or a more genial tone of religion. But none of us is so absurd as to deny, whatever our morbid humors, that we are, in all essential relations of life, capable of moral knowledge and choice. What strange power this habit of dealing with gases and earths and *post-mortem* dissections has to make some men of learning the veriest children in their knowledge of the first principles of human character or moral law! If I should pretend to give an essay on the structure of the lungs, and should say nothing of its normal function, but note all possible cases of tubercular disease, and then conclude that this was the nature of the lungs, I should follow the exact method of such reasoners. To rear a theory of physical necessity out of such exceptional cases is to stultify all knowledge. It makes no difference between the inherited tendency and the growth of evil habits. It offers no hope for struggle against natural weakness. It educates our infirmities into full-grown vices. It destroys the whole moral basis on which society rests. Legislation would not become more scientific, but simply incapable of any decision, and at last anarchy. Admirable world! where each murderer could claim his inherited passions as a personal privilege, each thief urge his irresistible lust; and

the great robber whom we have lately sent to prison could plead that he obeyed the omnipotent law of nature, which created him like the shark to prey on the lesser fry of the social waters. No; we may thank God there remain moral sense and common-sense enough to refute such sophistry. There are thousands who need the discipline of justice; and the pretended humanity that forgets it is no mercy, but cruelty to the larger number, who are so unhappy as to have committed no crime to entitle them to the interest of our men of science. Nor would such science only palsy justice, but it would destroy the motive power of all benevolence. It is idle to talk of any social cure if we deny the fact of moral responsibility. He who has no capacity to know right from wrong can never learn it; and if there be no evil save physical infirmity, there is nothing to be learned, for the remedy is as hopeless as the disease.

But I pass to the second of those mysteries so perplexing to many minds—I mean that of ignorance or vicious education. As we see the growing curse of our civilization, the hideous statistics of the great city, where thousands are bred in the sunless dens of vice, and seemingly doomed to moral death, it is a problem that at times might tempt us to the merciless doctrine of Darwin, as if

the same law of the destruction of the weak many for the survival of the few were as true of the human race as of beast and reptile. But we thank God there is in the evil the ground of a nobler activity. We must not shut our eyes to the bearing of such facts on a Christian education. Do we accept the religion that would condemn these unhappy thousands by the same rule we apply to more favored classes? God forbid such an affront to the Gospel of Christ! Nor is it to be forgotten that we must begin with the cure of the outward evils, before we can do much for the training of the moral or religious character; that the study of the laws of health, the better adjustment of social labor, the opening of new channels of industry, are noble features of our reform to-day. But surely we can admit all that a practical wisdom asks, without concluding that the vices of mankind are wholly the result of physical law. Yet this is the doctrine taught by a large class of our wise men, in essays on reform, and theories of social science. It is useless to indulge in any speculative fancies of religious or moral improvement. The only aim of philanthropy is to rear this selfish animal man as we rear a breed of Alderneys or a better variety of fowls. Indeed, I know no book more disheartening to every lover of human good than one often

quoted as an oracle of this modern school; I mean Buckle's History of Civilization. The principle of physical necessity is his key to all social growth. The moral character of people or age is as mere a result of outward laws as a record of the weather; and if we know the race, the climate, the conditions of development, we may reckon the exact proportion of thieves, suicides, murderers. History, in his view, has been altogether falsely written on the theory of human freedom. Its ages, its great men, its progress in art, letters, social polities, all are facts of nature, as the question of the crops and the best modes of drainage. And what, then, does this historic arithmetic prove? It proves no necessity at all. The reckoning of moral probabilities is not like a law of nature. We may learn much from such statistics for the wise method of our philanthropy; but to infer hence that there is no power of moral action, is a monstrous folly. What is a sociology that proposes to educate a being without any moral capacity? Where shall we find in history, if it be only this product of outward causes, the highest truth that explains the past, or gives hope for the future? Wonderful philosophy of progress! It opens a new view of the historic characters of all time. A Domitian is as innocent in the amusement of killing Christians as in catching

flies. A Borgia is as blameless a hero of his time as a St. Louis. The saints and the sages are as pure a growth of nature as the bread-fruit or the orange. The contests of civil or religious liberty are, as Milton said of the heptarchy, "the battle of kites and crows."

Is this the law of civilization? A grub might on the same theory write the rise and fall of his insect dynasties. We read law indeed in history; we know the social influences that combine in the growth of its great ages; but it is the moral power of man, as he struggles with the forces of nature and human life, that makes its grandeur. Even in the domain of physical science, methinks a scholar should read the contradiction of such a theory. When I recount the marvels which a gifted countryman of our own in his book on Man and Nature has gathered with a wealth of learning as rare as is its Christian spirit; when I remember how the weakest of creatures in bodily might has changed our rude planet during his few thousand years as wondrously as in any of the prehistoric ages; how, through his toil, there has been a new distribution of plant and animal; how climates have grown soft as he opened the forests to the sunshine; lands have been won from the waters; his dikes have defied the seas; rivers

have been guided into fresh channels; torrid zone and polar ice have yielded their secrets; I know him to be more than the growth and slave of nature; I know the power his Maker gave him to subdue the earth. Yet this is but the lowest side of his capacity. His history reveals a higher conquest than in the physical world. In that Christianity which our profound sage banishes from his view of civilization as quite beneath his interest; those crowded centuries of progress from the hordes of Northern Europe to the world of to-day; that faith glowing even in the shade of superstition; those heroes who died at the stake for what our modern wisdom calls a faded legend; the colossal person of a Luther, a Galileo, who led on the new order—in these I see what vindicates the moral rank of man, and at the same time shows the living guidance of God. History is nothing if it be not the biography of such leaders of the race. Take out of civilization this personality, and it is a page as void of human interest as the story of the ichthyosaurus and mammoths. You may call it progress; I know nothing so cheerless and hopeless as such materialism. No; it is the very opposite that a Christian science teaches. Its triumphs have been the fruit of faith in the quickening power of goodness upon the moral nature. It is because, in

the most depraved of human beings, there is some fountain of conscience, like the fresh springs under the salt sea, some striving after purity, some feeling of obligation, that we have hope in the redemption of the man or of the race.

I trust, Christian friends, that this law of responsibility has been made clear to your reason and conscience. I have sought fairly to accept every light which a wise science can cast on the evils of human life; but I have not disguised my view of a theory as false to science as it is to the spirit of Christianity. Is this the boasted result of modern knowledge; this philosophy that can affront the most sacred convictions of the soul, and dissect the moral nature with as little heed of the human beings around us as of the writhings of a frog under a galvanic battery? No! let such notions become, as they may be in an age of curious opinion, the creed of many half-thinking minds; let the belief in the reality of moral law be shaken, and not only our hold of Christianity, but the life of social virtue will be palsied at the heart. We can not overrate the importance of this one truth. Our faith in the being of God, in the personal Providence that guides the world, and in a future existence, is bound up with it. I thank God, indeed, that we need have no lasting fear of the triumph

of such error. Science itself will refute the crude theories that abuse its name. I look forward with a hearty faith to the day when its discoveries shall lead the mind of our time to a surer knowledge of that gospel which sheds the only perfect light on the darkness of human history and the mystery of evil; and if the shifting clouds of modern opinion leave us sometimes in shadow, I keep my eyes fixed on the eternal sun.

And thus, in closing, I would urge on you, my friends, for your own personal belief and action, to prize the sacred inheritance which God has given you in this moral truth. Let no subtleties of a Christian or an unchristian speculation obscure it. Whatever the mysteries of life, whatever the struggles of our own personal experience, hold fast the belief that there is a Providence, that duty and holiness are realities, that we are not the slaves of destiny, but the children of God. Study that fact of your spiritual being in the history of mankind. Read there the commentary witnessed in every evil life, from the monarchs of crime, who have said, "Evil, be thou my good," to the thousands of lesser wrong-doers; the profligate who has passed from lust to utter uncleanness; the dishonest who has nursed his greed to open fraud; the murderer who has plunged from unchecked passion into the abyss

of death. Study it in the biography of all the good who have wrestled with the infirmities of nature, and by the grace of God have won the battle; the scholars, the saints, the heroes, who have left us their lives, next to that of the perfect Master, to teach us the victory of faith. Study it in your own consciences; for this knowledge concerns us above all others. We know that there rests on each of us this law of our responsibility; and while we can not choose our lot, we can choose to make it the condition of triumph or of defeat. We rejoice in such a gift, but we rejoice with fear. We rejoice that we are made in the image of God; we fear that we may be the bond-slaves of an evil will: we rejoice that we have the renewing grace of the Holy Spirit; we fear that we may quench it by our own neglect: we rejoice that we may win the life eternal; we fear while we hold in our slight grasp the issue of life or death. That truth speaks to every honest mind. It speaks for our warning and for our comfort in the mingled record of our past years; the struggles of passion with duty, the sins, the trials, yet the rewards for which we can thank the Author and Giver of grace. Yes, blessed be God! this is the witness of a Christian conscience to the truth of His Gospel; and as we close the book of our own hearts and of history, it is with no philo-

sophy of despair, but with a deeper reverence for those laws which He has implanted in our nature, and an unshaken faith in the divine Love that speaks to-day over the body of our humanity, "It is not dead, but sleepeth."

THE RELATION OF MIRACLES

TO THE

CHRISTIAN FAITH.

BY THE

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THE RELATION OF MIRACLES TO THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

"If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works."—John 10: 37, 38.

No unfair reflection was meant to be implied, I take it, in the antithesis between "Christian *Truth* and modern *Opinion*" which we find in the general title of this current course of religious lectures. We are to see in such superscription no more than a simple, candid recognition of the fact, that between what is commonly regarded as "Christian Truth," on the one hand, and certain "Opinions," theories, or hypotheses, on the other, there exist various occasions of dissension and controversy, toward an adjustment of which these apologetic discourses are meant to be an honest and a substantial contribution.

How far they will serve to this end will depend, in the main, perhaps, upon the intellectual and scholarly competency of those appointed to discuss the several subjects. But something will depend,

also, upon the temper or spirit in which such discussions are conducted and accepted. We are supposed to enter the arena of debate free from every feeling prejudicial to Truth; with no disposition to dogmatize or dictate; nor to accept dogmatism, on the one side or on the other. The largest latitude must be allowed to investigation, and the severest exercise to the critical faculty must be freely conceded to all, or we had better retire from the strife, and betake ourselves for safety to recognized and accepted authorities.

The want of such an open-minded and impartial tolerance is an imputation very commonly alleged against the Christian apologist, and the reproach must be acknowledged as sometimes well-deserved. But the charge may be fairly retorted, alas! upon some who seem to assume that the judicial temper is never disturbed in men of science, nor the line of a rigorous logic ever forcibly bent to sustain a favorite hypothesis. Such a suspicion seldom fairly lies, perhaps, against acknowledged leaders of scientific thought; but in the ranks of their followers, there are many, it may be feared, who strain the doctrines of their masters, or make inferential applications of them, which betray what we may mildly term an unscientific animus. Men of this order constitute in our day a sort of lay-priesthood,

as narrow, and intolerant, and tyrannous in temper as the priesthood of the Church ever was in the days of its darkest supremacy. And this temper we encounter in its most arrogant mood specially in the field assigned me for discussion this evening. Inspired and fortified by the predominant tendencies and teachings of modern Materialism, scientific skepticism has waxed bold and defiant of late, and the spirit of this type of infidelity to-day is not so much one of doubt, as of scorn, of all supernatural claims and pretensions. The leading adversaries of historical Christianity, in this school, disdainfully refuse to consider any evidence whatever submitted in favor of any special intervention upon the established order of Nature, but start with the assumption as a postulate, that a miracle is impossible.

The extravagance of such a position must be obvious, however, to every candid thinker. Such a sweeping negative is incapable of being proved, except by an exhaustive induction, not only of all the facts of Nature as we know it now, but of all its past transitions and stages of development, and of all the possibilities which the future may have in reserve. The *possibility* of miracles, indeed, cannot be consistently denied, except on the ground of sheer Atheism. But the existence of a supernatural Being is necessarily assumed in the very terms

of the controversy between Faith and Unbelief. If such a preliminary claim be denied, *cadit quæstio:* there is an end, of course, to all argument upon the matter. The system of Nature can not arrest or in any way interfere with its own order and functions. In other words, Nature can not be *super*-natural.*

The abstract possibility of miracles must therefore be conceded before advance can be made in any direction in the conduct of the discussion. The question of the *moral* or *contingent* possibility of such phenomena remains, and such possibility may be legitimately denied. But the denial cannot be allowed to rest upon a merely partial induction of facts, or upon evidence derived only from one sphere of thought or research. For the problem is mixed, and its solution can not be left to any one professional school. Let the Materialist, or the Positivist, or the representatives of any of our various types of naturalistic science, submit their facts and arguments in disproof of the claim that Almighty God *has* ever intervened, or that He *does* intervene, or that He ever *will* intervene, in a supernatural way, with the order or functions of Nature, and the evidence must be received with the respect due to

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* "The possibility of a miracle is involved in the recognition of a Divine will."—PROF. PLUMPTRE.

its intrinsic force. But Moral and Spiritual Philosophy and Historical Criticism will claim to be heard at the same bar, not merely in mitigation of the evidence supplied by Physical Science, but in reversal of some of its characteristic conclusions. For though Physical Science may be competent to affirm what *is*, within the limits of its own observation and experiment, it is not competent, *quoad* Science, to say what *has* or has *not* been in the past, or what *may* or may *not* be in the future, except as a presumption from the present order of things; or to say what the cause or causes are, or are not, to which Science is compelled, in the last analysis, to assign all the varied phenomena which crowd the field of its investigation.

The student of a merely phenomenal science becomes intrusive and impertinent, therefore, when he presumes to prescribe limits to the possibilities of the mysterious Energy which works beneath and through phenomena, or to the Intelligence which seems to direct its operations and issues; but he becomes positively offensive and ludicrously illogical when he propounds his universal negative as a bar to all farther investigation or debate, which negative he can only sustain, if he condescend to defend his position at all, by a very limited induction of so-called facts, many of which may be still open to re-

view, while some may be doomed to final rejection. Let him say that he finds no trace of miraculous intrusion upon the order and sequences of Nature within the widest scope of his inspection or experiment, and we assent. No one claims any such discovery. But let him confess, too, if he would be consistent with the wise reserve of the best minds of his own school, and with the essential limits of its special sphere, that a merely phenomenal science can never be made to yield a particle of evidence against the *possibility* of miracles.

I shall hold myself justified, therefore, in assuming a Theistic basis for the argument I am here to submit, while I may be allowed to premise, also, that the range of the discussion will be confined to the miracles ascribed to Christ and His apostles, deeming it enough to authenticate the principle, without attempting to define the extent of its application. The substantial truth of the Gospel histories will be assumed, for it is not worth while to discuss the meaning or the value of the words or works of One the reality of whose life and character is denied; not meaning to cover by such assumption, of course, the question in debate, but availing myself of such materials only as the most destructive school of criticism concedes.

In venturing to advance, therefore, let it be

frankly admitted that there are antecedent, instinctive, necessary presumptions against the credibility of any event reputed to be miraculous; which presumptions are inspired by the uniformity of Nature, and confirmed by the practical trust we are compelled to repose in her invariable and steadfast order, and by the beneficent results of obedience to her equal, inflexible laws. And this instinctive feeling or faith has been immensely fortified by the progress of scientific discovery, very notably within recent years. From the time of Thales, such progress has largely consisted in "the elimination of supposed Divine interferences, and in the disclosure of an established order. One department of Nature after another has been brought within the circle of ascertained law. Phenomena, seemingly capricious, have been found to recur with a regularity not less unvarying than the succession of day and night."* A comet was once looked upon as a sort of firebrand, which the Almighty had thrown into space to startle and to terrify the occupants of our globe, and its career was watched in amazement and fear, lest haply it might strike this unruly orb, and light it up as a great funeral-pyre, a spectacle and a warning to the outlying sisterhood

* Prof. Fisher.

of worlds. But to-day, we track its brilliant march through the heavens with as much composure as we trace the silvery pathway of the quiet moon. Pestilence was once the arbitrary infliction of Divine vengeance upon the sins and depravities of peoples. Now, we have theoretically and practically come to account for it as a consequence of the breach of sanitary laws. The earthquake was once esteemed nothing less than the immediate voice of God, and it was the direct hand of Omnipotence which tore the hills from their foundations, and rent the bars of the solid earth, burying cities and populations in a common grave. Now, it is merely the unequally distributed forces of Nature finding an outlet for themselves in this somewhat rude and disorderly way. Thus scientific research and achievement have combined with the popular instinct to create not merely an antipathy, but what passes among some for a well-grounded conviction, against all arguments in favor of the super-natural. Yet the feeling is nothing better than an imposing prejudice, while, logically regarded, the conclusion has been reached by a sort of leap in the dark; for though the induction has been carried far beyond the limit to which our forefathers had applied the process, it is confessedly very far from complete still, viewed in regard to either Space or Time.

And since Science is forward to tell us that she knows nothing of causes or of final ends, that she simply seeks to know what *is*, and not the *whence*, or *why*, or *whither* of things, there may be, beyond the penetration of her finest instruments, or the detection of her subtlest analysis, or the discovery of her boldest explorations, a supernatural Intelligence and Power, evidence of whose special operation may be possibly found in other spheres, which Physical Science has failed to find in her own. It is at least premature, therefore, if not impertinent, to tell us that the evidence is all in, and the verdict recorded, while the evidence is avowedly defective, and the verdict *ex parte*.

The fashionable but pitifully inadequate conception of Nature, in the world of modern Materialism, is that Nature is a purely physical organism, whose causes are *in* and whose effects are wholly *from* itself; a huge automatic machine, which has in it, either by original endowment or from an inherent necessity, the powers of self-movement, self-renewal, self-propagation. The great Artificer, when He built it (if, in mere courtesy, Science will still allow that Nature ever had a Maker at all), left it to run on without intervention or inspection from Him; left it to grind out results in a blind, relentless way, which it were wise if men would look

upon as stern necessities merely, and enjoy them or endure them in thankless, dumb submission. Nature has thus been deified by the disciples of our latest infidelity; her laws are adequate to account for all phenomena, to satisfy all necessities. A Divine Providence was the amiable conceit of our intellectual infancy. Men are wiser now. Nature is the all and in all. She has the springs of a perpetual movement and progress in herself. No intelligence guides her course; no almighty hand controls her functions. She is a scheme of rigid and relentless necessity; the incarnation of fate; an endless round of cause and effect; a huge mill, in which man is doomed to tread the ever-circling wheel till he drop into the oblivion beneath. But cries or entreaties can not help him; so, like the wiser brute, let him step patiently to time, or the great wheel may grind him to powder.

This is the Gospel of modern Materialism, and the *deus ex machina* which works all the mighty wonders which we group under this somewhat vague term Nature, is Law, to the loose or merely rhetorical use of which word we may trace many of the impotent conclusions which some of our best minds seem to have reached in their attempts to discredit the accepted faith of Christendom. Common people are filled with a mute reverence as they

sit at the feet of our scientific authorities, who talk so imposingly of the omnipotence and immutability of law; which law, they tell us, is adequate to account for all the phenomena of the universe, with no indebtedness to a Supreme Power. We are imposed upon by words, maxims, formulæ; for, strictly speaking, a law is nothing but a generalization of the mind, an intellectual abstraction, and has no concrete or potential existence at all. The mind perceives, through observation or by experiment, that phenomena come into being or transpire uniformly under certain conditions, and then we are said to have discovered the law of their being or operation; but in truth, we have simply discovered and formulated the conditions or coincidences of their being and action. "A scientific law is not an ordinance, but a record." There is something beneath or behind the phenomena which produced them, but what that something is we must learn elsewhere than in the school of Physical Science. "The mere ticketing and orderly assortment of external facts," observes the Duke of Argyll, "is continually spoken of as if it were in the nature of explanation, and as if no higher truth in respect to natural phenomena were to be attained or desired:" and we are left to infer that there is no call for any power above or beyond law, either to originate or

direct its movements. This would seem to be the faith of the fashionable philosophy in our day, which is seldom formally and fully affirmed, however, but which is rather implied or insinuated in a vague, grandiloquent style of talk. But by the injection of a logical solvent, we may detect the most extravagant absurdities in such wide-sweeping assumptions. "The universe is ordered and ruled by law"—that is the favorite formula. But it covers an enormous fallacy. Ordered and ruled by law! Why, then, order is the Orderer! the rule is the Ruler! which claim involves an absurdity, since order is a *resultant* of some anterior cause or causes; and we are thus detected in confounding sequences with antecedents, and are fairly chargeable with talking nonsense.

"No," it might be said, "not law as a mere generalization, as an observed uniformity of processes or results only; that is not what is meant. But law as the expression of *force*, which operates and reveals itself through fixed laws." Yes, force! It is manifest that we have needed that conception all along to complete our conception of Nature. Coexistences, resemblances, and successions are not enough. Laws are more than "an observed order of facts." They are the grooves, so to speak, through which some sort of *inspiration*, *influence*, *power*,

flows, finding expression for itself in manifold and ever-varying phenomena. Force is thus admitted by all to be an indispensable postulate in the interpretation of Nature, of which a large, free use is made in current speculation, especially in the various schools of materialistic philosophy, in which the conception is made to fill the vacancy created by the denial of a personal God. Force is thus the latest name given to the "unknown god" of Science; a convenient designation of that animating, energizing, wonder-working Power which ever escapes detection; that subtle, mysterious Something which penetrates and vitalizes every atom in the universe; which

> "Warms in the sun, refreshes in the breeze,
> Glows in the stars, and blossoms in the trees;"

but of which we learn no more as to its origin or essence when we trace it to "protoplasm" with Mr. Huxley, or call it "animal spirits" with Des Cartes. We cover the mystery with a name, and fondly assume we have explained it; but we are no nearer to a solution of the great problem than before.

But we have made an immense advance toward a sounder philosophy of Nature, and toward a worthier conception of something beyond and

above Nature, since we have had done with barren talk about some sort of self-executive mechanism as the best account to be given of the present economy of things; more especially since we have learned to speak, not of *forces*, but of *Force*. "The tendency of Natural Science, in its earlier stages, is to establish a plurality of forces. Nature is conceived to have in stock as many powers as she has kinds of product to display." But since it has been shown that "all the forces comprised under the term 'physical' are so 'correlated' as to be no sooner expended in one form than they reappear in another—in fact, to be convertible *inter se*—a dynamic identity, masked by transmigration," has been established; which doctrine has been carried up and applied to Vital and Mental forces—the conclusion, now universally accepted, being, that "the plurality of forces is an illusion; that, in reality, and behind the variegated veil of phenomena, there is but one force, the solitary fountain of the whole infinitude of change."*

Strangely enough, then, through avenues that we never expected to conduct us thither, we have come upon an underlying central *Unity*, of which all outward forms and functions are but the necessary in-

* Rev. James Martineau.

struments or results. The multitude of gods with which the older sciences had peopled space have all vanished, and in their stead we have one grand, awful, omnipresent Power! It is surely to be counted a solid gain to those who have all along held that Nature, manifold and devious in form and movement, is nevertheless a witness to the unity of something deeper than Nature, and which they, in their innocence or fanaticism, have been content to call God.

But we have come upon something more wonderful still, even upon that which Philosophy claims, with the assent of Science, to call *Spirituality;* not in its full theological sense, perhaps, but as an admissible designation of an attribute which we are compelled to regard as hyperphysical or immaterial. "If," says the writer just quoted, "we are to reduce the numerical variety of forces to one, which member of the series is to remain as the type of all? Shall we more rightly presume that the lowest term, the mechanical, passes upward and reappears in the form of mind? or that the highest descends, divesting itself of prerogative qualities at each step, and appearing at last with quantitative identity alone? For answer to these questions, we must turn from the physical to the metaphysical scrutiny of the main conception. . . . . Cast your eye, then, along

the series enumerated by Grove and Carpenter, and ask yourself in which of these forms the dynamic idea originally necessitates itself. Is it that you have to supply it on seeing an external body change its place? or on witnessing some chemical phenomenon, as an acid stain of red on a blue cloth? or on noticing the needle quiver to the North? It will be admitted that, if we ourselves were purely passive, all these changes might cross our visual field with only the effect of a time-succession—first one movement and then another; while, conversely, if, without any of these phenomena exhibiting themselves before us, we ourselves were in the active exercise of Volition more or less difficult, the idea of Force would be provided for. It follows that *Will* is the true type of the conception." "The sense of effort," Dr. Carpenter affirms, is the ground of all our "causal thought," "the form of Force which may be taken as the type of all the rest," declaring that our consciousness of Force is really as direct as is that of our own mental states; and concluding that "Force must be regarded as the direct expression or manifestation of that mental state which we call Will."*

Do we realize the grandeur and scope of this doc-

* "Mutual Relations of the Vital and Physical Forces."

trine? a doctrine which finds its ultimate authority in consciousness and its sanction in the council-chamber of Science—know we what it means? It means, in the language of an acknowledged authority in the world of experimental philosophy,* "that the laws of Nature are but the modes of operation of the Divine Intelligence, that the forces of Nature are but the omnipresent energizing Divine Will, that even the objects of Nature are but the embodiments of Divine thoughts." It means that all the forms and functions of Nature are the expressions, mediate or immediate, of an immanent Mind, of an omniscient and omnipotent God, "from whom, and by whom, and to whom are all things, to whom be glory and dominion for ever!"

In the conduct of the discussion thus far, I have been chiefly aiming to secure a fulcrum on which to rest the lever of a positive argument. Is it too much to claim that the task is accomplished? Nature is not a Totality nor a Finality; but a passive and an obedient instrument in the hands of Intelligence and Power, which direct the complex Organism toward the attainment of other and higher ends than its own being and necessities. A new class of terms, therefore, have successfully asserted their

* Prof. Le Conte.

claim to admission into the vocabulary of Science—Intelligence, Will, Purpose—which can never again be remitted to the region of pure abstractions, or be counted as among the mere "fictions of metaphysics." They are recognized positive factors or postulates in the latest conception or scheme of the universe, which Physical Science has effectively contributed to construct. As we track our way along the ever-ascending line in pursuit of "the great secret," the process here culminates in man; and in the liberty, intelligence, and will of man, we have the essential lineaments of an image of God. What I have hitherto argued for as *a possibility*, in this higher sphere, is *fact*. Man is not a *thing*, but a *power*, "working all things," within the limited area allotted him, "after the counsel of his own will;" taking hold of the raw material of things, and, recombining its forms and relations and forces, getting at results which Nature alone never could have attained, the conception and realization of which are due to the intervention and controlling supremacy of Mind, which thus asserts its supernatural character and prerogative by crossing, suspending, or invigorating the functions and processes of Nature, in the accomplishment of purposes *above* Nature; in meeting necessities of which Nature knows nothing, breaking through the environment

of economic restrictions, or bending them to the furtherance of thought, affection, aspiration; moulding the crude clay of things into marvelous forms of beauty, or directing it to high and beneficent uses; seeking, through all combinations, processes, scrutinies, to read the riddle of moral being, to find some prophecy of a higher destiny, to catch some echo of a voice which may lead us through "this dim obscure," into the light and joy of an eternal home! Has any such voice been heard in our world? We are in quest of an answer to that inquiry.

A footing for the argument is conceded then. If man is a wonder-worker, we may possibly discover ground for faith in a *miracle*-worker. When we have climbed to the plane of man's inferior lordship of Nature, the ascent is continuous still, and we climb up through hint and inference, through analogy, intuition, revelation, to the uppermost conceivable plane of an infinite Intelligence and Power. The human will is the acknowledged spring of a spontaneous energy. Somewhere there must be a Fountain-head of that energy which streams through all the avenues and conduits of creation. By the causal intervention of man upon the order and sequences of Nature, results are reached confessedly præter-natural. It cannot be deemed a shocking

impiety therefore, or a merely conventional superstition, to conceive of Almighty God other than as an idle spectator of the automatic movements of a manifold organism. Christianity is a bold and persistent affirmation of the fact, that God not only constructed the organism, but that He directs its movements, and that at certain epochs of its history, under special groups of conditions, He has come down upon its ordinary workings in what we are wont to call a miraculous way. What is the character and value of the evidence upon which such a claim or pretension rests?

The case may be broadly stated thus. Jesus Christ and His Apostles profess to have wrought, or it is claimed that they wrought, many wonderful works, under the immediate authority and by the special power of God. I do not add, be it observed, as "signs" or authenticating notes of a Divine commission; for that were an unnecessary and unjust limitation of the facts in many cases. *All* of Christ's miracles may have been signs or attestations of His divine mission *in effect*, but not all of them were such by immediate and express *design*. Many of the wonders wrought by Jesus must be regarded as the results of a spontaneous effluence of wisdom and goodness, in connection with which it is gratuitous to find any evidential design whatever. These wonders

or signs, it may be added, moreover, are so wrought up into the texture of the story of Christ's life, that it is simply impossible to eliminate the ordinary from the exceptional elements of its contents. The New Testament records these events in a plain, straightforward, unambiguous style, as historically true. They cannot be fairly regarded as mere appendages to the life and work of Christ, which we can reject without damage to the substantial integrity of the record, or to the coherence and unity of the character and mission of Jesus; for when we have discarded the præter-natural facts of the Christian Scriptures, it will be found that we have a very meagre and fragmentary residuum left, in the shape of ethical and practical precepts. The Incarnation and the Resurrection of Christ, at least, must be held to be integral factors of the Gospel, or the story of Evangelists and Apostles becomes "another Gospel," of which Christendom has known nothing. I am not saying that the case was actually so, which would be to preclude all further argument on the subject; but that so runs the record. The issue is plain, therefore, and cannot be evaded. If the miracles of Christ are incredible, the New Testament is incredible; Christianity is incredible; for as a distinctive system, it manifestly rests on the miraculous advent and work of One who said, "If

I do not the works of my Father, believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works."

This broad statement requires to be limited, however, by sundry qualifications, through which the precision and force of the argument may come into fuller view. We are to keep the mind free of all suspicion, in the first place, that Christ's miracles were, in any true sense, merely *arbitrary* infractions upon the domain of a Divine order. We are to claim for them rather that they were beneficent reassertions and vindications of such order; reparations of defective or diseased parts of the great Kosmos, as when He healed the leper or gave sight to the blind. Such phenomena require us to concede no more than an orderly subordination of secondary to primary causes. We are familiar with such subordination in the sphere of *human* enterprise and achievement. Is it only when a *Divine* power comes down upon the chain of causation, dispensing with intermediate processes, that such interference is to be deemed a lawless intrusion? The doctrine of the late Mr. Baden Powell, of "a series of eternally impressed consequences," is sometimes assumed by our scientific schools to afford a key to the true interpretation of Nature. Fichte, as cited by the late Dean Mansel, gives us a very picturesque

statement of the doctrine. "Let us imagine," says he, "this grain of sand lying some few feet further inland than it actually does. Then must the storm-wind that drove it in from the seashore have been stronger than it actually was. Then must the preceding state of the atmosphere by which this wind was occasioned, and its degree of strength determined, have been different from what it was, and the previous changes which gave rise to this particular weather; and all to carry this particular grain of sand a few feet farther than the point where it actually lies!" All perfectly pertinent and just, upon the one assumption that there is nothing in God's creation but automatic mechanism, or blind, determinate forces. But there is, unless the consciousness and experience of the world are illusions or lies. The human Will is a fountain of free force, which suspends or modifies the action of the mightiest and most inexorable laws of Nature, as when I lift a hand or move a foot, I arrest or limit the law of gravitation; and yet no one dreams of shock or disturbance of any sort to the normal order of things from such interference with its ordinary antecedents and sequences. Only let the same freedom and prerogative be conceded to the *Divine* Will, on a higher and wider plane of operation, and what becomes of the charge that a miracle means

anarchy and ruin to "the constitution and course of Nature"? And yet it is by such sophistical pleading that men seek to justify the horror they affect to feel whenever we speak of the miracles of Christ! while the advocates of Christian Truth have sometimes incautiously lent support to such an antipathy, in speaking of a miracle as a *violation* of natural law; which is to be regarded as a merely verbal indiscretion, perhaps, in most instances, but which allows of mischievous inferences and applications, of which their adversaries have not been slow to take advantage. It is unfortunate that the phrase ever gained currency, since it seems to imply some sort of conflict in the Divine plan and government of the world. Whereas it must follow, from the conception of the SUPREME RULER as infinitely wise and powerful, that there can never have arisen any occasion of contradiction or collision in the economy which He first ordained and continues to administer. He could never have been taken by surprise by any emergency not before provided for, nor can there possibly have ensued any sort of failure in the accomplishment of His purposes calling for any special intervention of wisdom or power, which we could reasonably regard as special to the Divine Mind, at least, though possibly appearing special to finite Intelligences. We are to conceive of a

miracle, therefore, not as a violent irruption of power upon the normal order and action of things, but as a subordination of ordinary to extraordinary causes, provided for in the original scheme and constitution of the universe. And thus we may vindicate the place and function which are claimed for miracles, without resorting to assumptions which do violence to our necessary conceptions of the Divine government as a government under fixed and harmonious laws.

We are to guard, in the next place, against the conception or the application of the Christian miracles *as complete in themselves;* as destitute of all moral value, and void of all moral aim. We are to regard them rather as the legitimate effects of causes which embraced in the scope of their operation and aim such phenomena as mere incidents in their wider working; as links in a chain which runs along all the steps and stages of that sublime evolution of the Divine counsels of which history is a fragmentary record, and an installment of the final interpretation. Thus viewed, miracles were the natural consequences, so to speak, of the advent and ministry of a Divine Messenger, which occasion not only justified, but demanded such special displays of goodness and power in the furtherance of its mighty purposes, in meeting the exigencies of the

great moral epochs of history; exigencies which existed not in *Nature*, but in *Man*, in that he had become blinded and hardened by sin, and needed some higher manifestation of the presence and power of God. If we can only rise to a just and adequate conception of Christ's mission among men, it will be easy to conceive of miracles as the fit and, shall I say, necessary accompaniments of such a ministry. In the prosecution of His sublime enterprise, the Divine Son of Man resorted to unwonted exercises of wisdom and power, very much as a missionary to heathen peoples (*magna componere parvis*) may avail himself of the deeper resources of Nature which Science has revealed, from an instinctive benevolence, or to carry conviction of his authority to the minds of those to whom he is sent, the effect of which may not only *seem*, but in some sense may actually *be*, miraculous to the benighted intellects of those around him. By recombining the elements and forces of Nature—as in the cure of certain diseases, for instance—he might work what to such barbarians would be *super-human* works. A deeper and completer knowledge would regard such achievements as natural, of course, as coming within the scope of Nature, or as resulting from qualities and energies potentially in Nature; but they would be *præter*-natural to the savage. I

know the slippery place on which I am supposed to stand while indulging in such speculations; and I am prepared to hear the reply: "That is just the explanation of the wonders you call miracles in the case of Christ." We may at least be thankful to the progress of Science for rendering such an answer, not only impertinent, but irrational, in the sense intended by our adversaries. Every theory proposed to account for the miracles of the New Testament as wrought by any sort of legerdemain, or by the occult knowledge and use of merely natural implements and resources as then or now known to men, has been discredited, and is now abandoned by all. What I have been just aiming to suggest is, such a conception of the miracles of Jesus as may reconcile us to the habit of regarding them, not as *un*-natural, still less as *anti*-natural; but simply as being *beyond* Nature *as we know it*, but not as beyond Nature *as God knows it;* by extending the term into the upper realm of Divine Providence, for which I may claim the indorsement of Joseph Butler.*

And, finally, in the way of qualification: let us aim to get an intelligent grasp upon *the function and purpose of miracles* in their relation to the

* Analogy, p. ii. chap. ii.

Christian Faith. Most men of discernment have been brought to acknowledge that the place commonly assigned to miracles in the Evidences of Christianity was once too high and exclusive; while they are sometimes disparaged in our day as not only worthless, but as an incumbrance to the Christian apologist. "Miracles," it has been said, "instead of affording satisfactory proof of any thing, are now usually found in the dock, instead of the witness-box, of the court of criticism." And in acknowledgment of the partial justice of this caveat, Christian scholars are found discussing the *credibility* of miracles, and seeking to determine the question whether the doctrine proves the *miracle*, or the miracle the *doctrine*. Such an attitude of mind betrays confusion or perversion of intellect. No such sharp line can be run between the various kinds of evidence which may be brought in proof of the truth of the Christian religion; no absolute and invariable precedence can be established in behalf of any one line of evidence over others. Justly regarded, they are not merely mutually sustaining, but constituent parts of a complex whole. From one point of view, or in regard to one condition of the moral nature, the words of Jesus may be final and sufficient, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine that it is of God;" while

to men of another temper and complexion of character, He may say, "Go, and tell what things ye hear and see." From the one point of view or tone of mind, we may say with Mr. Coleridge, "The evidences of Christanity are—Christianity;" while from another, we may say with John Foster, "Miracles tolled the great bell of the Universe, and Christianity was the sermon that followed." The two lines of light converge to the same point. The supernatural spiritual power within, flowed forth, as occasion called, in supernatural expressions of love or wisdom or might without. The life was one; all its effluences were from the same source, all its purposes had the same end. We forget this, and go astray sometimes in the use of technical distinctions, or in attempting to distribute the phenomena into independent groups. Some of the manifestations of Christ's character we look upon as exceptional, and we call them miraculous; but only to our lower and limited apprehension were they such; not as involving any incoherence, or want of unity of any sort, in the character itself. Miracles are nothing but stupendous marvels when viewed alone. They prove nothing; they mean nothing; they are embarrassments in the way of Faith. But viewed as part of a system of things having the same origin and inspiration and end, in the line of a continuous

evolution of moral and spiritual teaching, as steps toward the great consummation which Christ came to accomplish, miracles take their place in the evolving order, as at once authenticating and authenticated "signs" of a mission which is essentially supernatural in its whole conception, execution, and aim. We must look at *the whole of the case*, in forming an estimate of the function and purpose of miracle; at the preliminary dispensations of God's wisdom and grace; at the exigencies of time, and place, and moral condition, when and in which the signs and wonders are alleged to have been wrought; trying, above all, to take in something like an adequate conception of the person and office of Christ; of the breadth and elevation and simplicity and beauty of His character; of the manifestly exceptional place He fills in the moral economy of the world, and in the unfolding of the plan of God, and of the solemn and everlasting issues of His life and death. Take *all* into account, and what appeared to be incidental discrepancies, perhaps, before will resolve themselves into order and harmony; seemingly discordant facts will be found mutually sustaining; while devious lines of evidence will be seen to blend into one mighty and transcendent testimony to the truth of historical Christianity.

In the statement of these precautions, I have indicated, and to some extent defined, what I hold to be the just "Relation of Miracles to the Christian Faith." By the Faith, I understand the great facts and doctrines of the New Testament. It is no part of my task to state the grounds upon which these are supposed to rest. They are such, at least, as cannot be fairly passed by as if in contempt by the apostles of the prevalent unbelief. Yet this is the style in which the evidence brought to sustain the credibility of the Christian miracles is commonly treated in our day. Those who claim to speak in disproof of such credibility, in the name of modern Science, presume to ignore generally the *data* derived from other spheres of thought and investigation, and the question is therefore discussed and hastily decided according to the canons and postulates of physical philosophy merely. It is assumed that the witness of Nature, or of professed interpretations of Nature which we call Science, is exhaustive and final, which to the intelligent Christian apologist betrays a willful perverseness. It is surely open to us to demand that the case shall not be closed against us in this arbitrary and offensive way. If any evidence of a counter or even qualifying character and tendency can establish a presumptive right to be heard, it can not be fairly refused on the

assumption of the exclusive validity of the criteria of Physical Science. For not only may those criteria be made to do good service in support of other and opposite conclusions, but the question is one in which Spiritual Philosophy and Historical Criticism are profoundly interested, and to the just determination of which they profess their ability to bring indispensable testimony. We simply say, let it be received, and let it be well and honestly weighed, and Christian Faith will abide the issue.

I am not required, in the prosecution of my present purpose, to attempt even a hasty survey of all the varied evidences which conspire to demonstrate the supernatural claims of Christianity. I assumed the substantial truth of the Gospel histories as a postulate in the debate, and this is guaranteed by evidence as valid and conclusive for its own ends as the evidence upon which the conclusions of Science repose. Criticism may require us to dispense with some things in the received Record, but they are of insignificant value. "The foundation standeth sure," our adversaries being witness. The mutually exclusive or destructive attempts of Paulus, Strauss, Schleiermacher, and Renan to divest the Christ of the Gospels of all supernatural attributes may suffice to prove that the great problem can not be thus solved; that we can not consistently retain

faith in the transcendent excellence and beauty of the character of Jesus as a man, and dismiss all higher claims as "cunningly devised fables." We are compelled to admit a supernatural element to explain the natural; the *human* facts in the life and character of Jesus can only be rendered consistent by the admission of claims that are essentially *Divine*. The Gospels are reduced to a mass of fragmentary incongruities when we have eliminated all the elements which an infidel rationalism rejects. "Stubbornly and obstinately the narratives refuse to be so dealt with." We cannot thus undo the subtle interpenetrations of admitted fact and alleged fiction in the fourfold Biography. The two are so organically and vitally blended that they can never be fairly disentangled. We may cut the knot; it can never be untied by the most relentless criticism. The admission of fiction discredits essential facts; while if the claim be once allowed that Christ was at least "a teacher sent from God," or *such* a teacher as the Evangelists portray, all the marvelous words and works ascribed to Him in their writings gather round the image of His person in a vital coherence and harmonious order. An interior unity reveals itself in the records of His life, which can never be accounted for by the coarse imputation of fraud, nor by ascribing it to the invention

of a wonder-loving fanaticism. The character of Christ, with only the lineaments allowed by a hostile criticism, is the one standing miracle which authenticates or which renders credible all the signs and wonders of the Gospels, while the signal revolution which Christianity wrought in the moral world within a generation of its birth confirms the sublime claim, to which eighteen centuries have added an unbroken testimony, and of which living Christendom is the visible and stupendous monument.

THE ONENESS OF SCRIPTURE.

BY

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THE ONENESS OF SCRIPTURE.

". . . the Scripture can not be broken."—JOHN 10 : 35.

THAT which Christ here says can not be done, a thousand forces in our day are laboring to accomplish. To break the Scripture, to dismember the body of revelation, to tear into a multitude of unconnected parts a volume which the common instinct of Christians has hitherto affirmed to be one book, is the present endeavor of those who think it high time for intelligent men to be starting in search of a new religion.

The line of attack is well chosen. To the casual eye, appearances more or less favor the opinion that the Bible is simply the classic literature of a people whose line of thinking lay in the direction of religion.

How can oneness, it is urged, be attributed to a collection of historical, poetical, and epistolary writings, which confessedly range, as to their date of composition, over a period of many centuries, and which are known to have come from the

hands of at least forty or fifty different contributors?

With many minds, the mere statement of the proposition is the refutal of it. The thesis strikes them as involving absurdity in its very terms. And yet, in the face of this incredulous and, as it would seem, reasonably incredulous spirit, Christians have the boldness to maintain that, notwithstanding its wide sweep of dialects and styles and topics, the Bible does possess unity in the very most complete and thorough sense the word can bear.

Before undertaking to investigate the grounds of this conviction entertained by Christians, let us first attempt to form a clear notion of what we mean when we claim for any book the characteristic of unity. That a certain number of printed pages are contained between two covers may justify a librarian in saying, "This is *a* book;" but it would not justify a reader in saying, "This is *one* book."

Take a collection of pamphlets, on various disconnected topics, which somebody, for convenience' sake, perhaps because the pages were of the same length and breadth, has had bound up into a single volume—shall we say of these, that they are one book? Not if we wish to use language accurately. The only unity the pamphlets have acquired by being stitched together is of a purely external and ma-

terial sort. They have been made into one volume, but not into one book.

Suppose, now, another case. A writer, who has contributed essays on various subjects to literary periodicals, makes up his mind to collect and publish them. He does so. What shall we say of the result? Is it one book? Yes; in a certain sense, it may fairly be called so. It has one important element of unity—unity of authorship. A single mind has conceived and wrought out all that the volume contains. This was not true of the bound pamphlets.

Take still another case. Here are various writers, who have a common interest in some particular subject. We will suppose it to be a very large subject—so large that a single mind would scarcely be able to grasp all the details of it. These associates, therefore, join forces, and divide the work among them. How shall we characterize the product of their combined efforts? Is it one book? I answer as before—yes, in a partial sense, it is. The book has this one important element of unity—oneness of subject. The various authors have all concentrated their attention, by common consent, upon a single field.

Suffer me one more instance. Suppose the case of a man who has made up his mind to write a work

upon some topic which he has long studied and thoroughly mastered. He arranges his materials. He lays out his plan. He determines how much space he will assign to this branch of his subject, how much to that. He is as careful as a painter would be about his lights and shades, determined that his work shall be symmetrical, well balanced, evenly done; he sees the end from the beginning, and, while carefully elaborating each separate feature and limb, never allows himself to forget for a moment the desired effect of the perfect whole. Now, what shall we say of this book? Certainly we can say no less of it than that it possesses the very perfection of literary unity. The bound pamphlets had only a material oneness. The book of miscellaneous essays could claim unity of a better sort—that of authorship. The encyclopædia, compiled by various hands, possessed another, but still partial, kind of unity—the unity of subject. In the case last supposed, and only in that, do we find unity complete. This is, in very deed and truth, not only one volume, but one book.

The Christian believer, as I have said, claims for the Scriptures this perfection of unity. They have, he declares, one author and one subject—their author, God; their subject, God's revelation of Himself in *Jesus Christ*.

The names commonly given to the Scriptures are indicative of this confidence in their unity. We call them the "Word of God," thus signifying our faith in their common origin. We call them "the Bible," because, although this word might mean, and in early English did mean, any book, we count the Word of God pre-eminently worthy to be called, of all books, the book. Such is the Christian's claim. Can it be substantiated? For the handling of this question, we are here to-night. Let us take up the inquiry in earnest, and prosecute it without fear.

I remark, then, in the first place, that the Christian's faith in the unity of the Bible rests on the basis of a conviction that lies deeper still—namely, on the belief that human history has unity, and that a never-failing Providence ordereth all things, both in heaven and earth. Only with those who are willing to concede this postulate will any argument for the oneness of the Scriptures carry much weight.

Three views of history are possible, and only three. The first is the purely atheistic view. We may look at the events of the far-reaching past in the same mood in which we watch the motion of the tangled burden of branches, roots, and drift-wood under which a swollen river, in a spring freshet,

hurries to the sea. History is a mere chaos of facts, linked to each other in no definite relationship. Monarchs have succeeded monarchs; dynasties have risen, flourished, and sunk into decay; lands have been invaded; institutions overthrown; cities builded and destroyed; but in it all there has been no progress; no evolution of a creative thought; no carrying out of an original purpose. According to this view, the chronicle is the only legitimate form of history. Man may keep his diary, but must not dream of writing his autobiography. He may accumulate his facts, but woe be to him if he ventures upon an interpretation of them.

A step, and only a step, in advance of the simply godless historians stand those who are willing to admit, nay, who are forward to claim that there is an order observable in human events, but who argue that the order is of such a sort as can only be understood in the light of census reports and geographical statistics.

The historical philosophers of this school discern not only "a tide in the affairs of men," but a law of tides; and for the chronicle substitute the almanac. But when we ask them who ordained the laws of sociology, whose are the thoughts which political economy strives to formulate, they fall back on the ancient dogma, "There is no God."

Again, there are those who base their view of history upon a dogma the opposite of that just quoted. They start with the persuasion, "Doubtless there *is* a God that judgeth the earth." Setting out in this spirit, they find it easy to discover that He whose existence is the first article of their creed has not left Himself without witness in the world. Way-marks are abundant to tell them where this Living God has passed. And gradually, so strong does this persuasion of the presence of that Hand in history become that, even when faith is tried and confidence shaken, the same instinct that prompts the astronomer to believe in the universal prevalence of Newton's law, in the face of some phenomena that seem to make against it, the same sort of instinct assures the devout student,

> "That God is on the field when He
> Is most invisible."

Well then, among the facts that confront the theist—I do not say the Christian, for I am aiming to put forward an argument that shall have weight with all who confess any faith in a personal, self-conscious God—among the facts that confront the theist, be he Christian or non-Christian, and clamor for an interpretation, are conspicuously two.

The first of these is the existence, in ancient

times, of a single nation devoted to the worship and service of a God to whom were attributed unity, conscious personality, omnipresence, and holiness. The modern mind rather begrudges the Hebrew race its title of "the chosen people." There is a growing indisposition to allow that He who made of one blood all nations of men can possibly have cared for any particular race more favorably than for another. But if there be, as there undoubtedly is, some law of selection ruling in natural history, why is it unreasonable to hold that God has followed an analogous principle of election in spiritual history? Be that as it may, modern thought professes, and rightly, a profound regard for facts. Now, it is, I believe, an acknowledged historical fact, account for it as we may, that of the various peoples of antiquity, the Hebrew was the only one whose tradition of God guarded with equal and impartial jealousy the four central attributes I just now named—unity, conscious personality, omnipresence, and holiness. Of the nations around, there were many that believed in the omnipresence of Deity; but they either sacrificed the divine unity by multiplying gods, or they lost their hold upon the divine personality by worshiping the all-soul diffused through nature; or they robbed the Eternal of His attribute of holi-

ness, by blotting the distinction between the pure and the impure, the clean and the unclean.

To the Hebrew only was it given to know Jehovah as the One Lord, present in nature while yet throned above all worlds; glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders. Well might the heathen sorcerer exclaim, as he stood on the mountain-top, gazing with reluctant admiration at the ordered encampment of the pilgrim host, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob! and thy tabernacles, O Israel! Blessed is he that blesseth thee, and cursed is he that curseth thee."

The consistency with which this stern, uncompromising theism is clung to, throughout the Old Testament, has something very striking about it. No doubt there is an abundance of wickedness recorded there; apostasy from the pure faith is frequent; treason against the unseen King continually repeats itself; but every now and then the voices of the men of God, like the chorus in the Greek tragedy, utter their comment, and the goodly fellowship of the prophets make themselves heard, as the spokesmen of the Lord Jehovah.

And this consistency of tone and spirit, pervading so many seemingly disconnected writings, is the more remarkable when we observe that not only in what they say, but also in what they are careful not

to say, do these writers harmonize with one another. "The silence of Scripture," as has been well remarked, is sometimes as eloquent as its speech. A single reference must suffice.

The belief in the reality of magic was almost universal among the Eastern nations during the whole period covered by the Old Testament. Now, if the notion that the various books of the Bible embody the opinions that were generally prevalent at the times when they were written were true, or if Coleridge's dictum, borrowed from Germany, that the Old Testament canon is simply the remains of the Hebrew Chaldaic literature, prior to the time of Ezra*—if either of these assumptions were correct, then we should expect to find in these writings what we do find in the Talmud and the Koran—plentiful allusions to the peril of magical influences. "But," says Mr. Reginald Poole, one of the most eminent of living authorities, "it is a distinctive characteristic of the Bible that, from first to last, it warrants no such trust or dread. In the Psalms, the most personal of all the books of Scripture, there is no prayer to be protected against magical influences. The believer prays to be delivered from every kind of evil that could hurt the body or the

* "Confessions of an Inquiring Spirit." Works (Shedd's Edition), vol. v., p. 612.

soul, but he says nothing of the machinations of sorcerers. Here, as elsewhere, magic is passed by, or is mentioned only to be condemned. Let those," he adds, "who affirm that they see in the Psalms only human piety, and in Job and Ecclesiastes merely human philosophy, explain the absence in them and throughout the Scriptures of the expression of superstitious feelings that are inherent in the Shemite mind."*

This, then, is the first fact to be accounted for in framing our philosophy of history—the existence in remote antiquity of a separate people, who held unflinchingly to a conception of the nature of the Godhead which has stood the test of theological criticism through all subsequent time.

The second fact is the phenomenon we call modern civilization. Great efforts have been made of late to depreciate the share Christianity has had in moulding society into its present shape. We are cautioned against allowing our sense of indebtedness to Judea to blind us to the claims of Greece and Rome and Egypt on our gratitude.†

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* Dr. Smith's "Dictionary of the Bible." Art., Magic. Am. Ed., vol. ii., p. 1742.

† John Stuart Mill "On Liberty." Am. Ed., p. 95. See also in a similar strain Leckey's "History of European Morals," vol. ii., p. 149.

Yet, when we come to study the marvelous advances in almost every department of knowledge and art by which our times are distinguished, it is impossible not to notice the fact that the progress in question has been almost exclusively confined to what are known as the "Christian" nations.

The Arabic achievements furnish no real exception to this statement, for, as has been acutely observed, Islam has more the nature of a heresy than of a false religion. Of the twelve hundred million inhabitants of the globe, only about one fourth part are nominally Christian, but among this fourth part, this fraction of the race, is to be found almost if not quite exclusively that spirit of progress which is our modern boast. Asia and Africa, with their eight hundred millions, stand still, as they have stood still for centuries. Europe and America, Christian and enlightened, press forward with a restless energy and steadfast purpose, before which the gates of seemingly unconquerable difficulty fall down. Explain it as we will, this is the simple, bare, statistical fact. The Christian nations are on the march, the heathen nations are at the halt. Christendom is hopeful, buoyant, aggressive; heathendom, despondent, stationary, dead.

With our eyes fresh from their momentary glance at these two prominent facts in the world's history,

we turn now to the question immediately before us —the unity of the Scripture. What is the Bible? What does it profess to be? Let us open it and ascertain. We find two principal divisions, called Testaments, Old and New. They used once to be known as "Instruments," and perhaps it would have been well if they could have kept the name till now, for it is one that seems to make the two hemispheres of revelation explain themselves as God's modes of handling His world. Lord Bacon entitled the work which was destined to revolutionize the scientific methods of his day, *Novum Organum*, but none would have been more forward than that great thinker to confess that his new instrument could not have been forged but for the old instrument that had preceded it. It was from the vantage-ground of the ancient learning that the modern took its departure. And so, as we shall see in the case of these two instruments in the one Bible, there is no real breaking of the Scripture—the Old is simply parent of the New. For look at it! These Testaments taken together give us what no other existing volume undertakes to give—namely, an interpretation of those two commanding facts to which I have referred as towering up, head and shoulders, above all the other phenomena of history. The Old Testament tells us how

and for what purpose the tradition of the holy God was kept alive. The New Testament tells us how and for what purpose the foundations of Christendom were laid. Discard these two Scriptures, and you lose your chief materials for moulding a philosophy of history. Deny their connection, and straightway you make them unintelligible.

We touch here the pivot-point of our inquiry, for we find ourselves in the presence of the test question, which, sooner or later, in every full discussion of social and religious problems, forces itself to the front: What think ye of Christ? We see Him to be plainly the one and only subject of the later Scripture; is He also, what He resolutely and steadfastly claimed to be, the one and only subject of the elder Scripture too? Does that despised and rejected One really hold in His hand the key to the secret of the ages? Is the angel of the Apocalypse in the right when he declares that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy"? The answer we give to these questions depends wholly upon our willingness or unwillingness to concede to Jesus Christ the right to speak on spiritual matters "as one having authority." If we have made up our minds to regard the Son of Mary as nothing more than a heavenly-minded, high-souled man, a teacher of purer morals than were generally accepted in His

day, a leader of religious thought among His fellow-countrymen, though of such commanding stature that His influence has extended itself to men of countries other than His own—if this be the rate at which we hold Him, then nothing will seem to us more irrational and absurd than to suppose that we are to look for supernatural references to Him in a collection of old books written centuries before His birth, by men who had no concert of action, and who were manifestly bent on speaking out what they had to say to the people of their own times. But if, on the other hand, one has become persuaded that such a view of the matter is as shallow as it is intelligible; if one has become persuaded that Christianity must be something more than a happy accident to have accomplished what it has accomplished in the world; if one has become persuaded that Jesus Christ was not so much the founder of a new religion as He was and is the centre and heart of all religion that is true, then it will not be difficult, but, rather, very easy to believe that for the coming of this Revealer into an untaught world a careful preparation was required, and that for an adequate and faithful record of this educating process, provision should have been made.

This willingness to risk every thing that is essential to Christianity, the integrity of its Scriptures,

the authority of its creeds, the perpetuity of its very structure, upon the simple word of Christ speaking to us out of the Gospels, used to be deprecated by cautious people as a too hazardous venture of faith. But sooner or later, "Wisdom is justified of all her children." In a recent work on Systematic Theology, which probably embodies the most conservative thought of our times, it is significant to find these words: "After all, Christ is the great object of the Christian's faith. We believe Him, and we believe every thing else on His authority."*

We have been dwelling thus far upon the Bible's unity of subject. Fewer words will suffice in treating of its unity of authorship. You see how the one conclusion hinges upon and is necessitated by the other. From the unity of subject, we can reason backward with safety to the unity of authorship; for when we have once satisfied ourselves that "the Scripture cannot be broken," that to snap its interlacing threads of connection would be like cutting the nerves, tendons, and cartilage that knit the joints of a living body, we find it impossible to account for so startling a fact save by supposing that from the beginning, one mind planned and one eye foresaw the whole.

* Dr. Hodge, "Systematic Theology" vol. i., p. 167.

You see also the great subsidiary advantages of this method, for it has enabled us to steer wholly clear of the petty entanglements with which the question of the Bible's authority has been needlessly but too often encumbered. Let a man pin his faith to some special philosophy of inspiration, and he is at the mercy of the first unfriendly critic, who can prove to him beyond a doubt that there are errors in the chronology of the Pentateuch, or discrepancies in the Gospel narratives. But he who grounds his confidence in the Bible as the word of God on the simple faith that there is a God, and that He has spoken to us through Jesus Christ, will stand in no dread of the microscopic fault-finder with his arithmetic and slate. The roots of that man's reverence for the Bible strike down too deep into the soil for the tree to be disturbed by every adverse wind of doctrine. The trifling inaccuracies charged against the Scriptures, should they be proved, will no more shake such a believer's trust in their divine authorship than the detection of a blemish here and there in the stone-work of St. Paul's Cathedral would convince him that Sir Christopher Wren did not design the building.

We ought as churchmen to thank God for the large wisdom which guided the Anglican reformers in their treatment of this subject. They

were content to receive and to hand on Holy Scripture as containing "all things necessary to salvation."*

It was reserved for later and lesser theologians to frame those artificial distinctions between kinds and degrees of inspiration from which men's intelligence has recoiled.

The view that has been now presented may be called the providential theory of the growth and completion of the Scriptures.

That it presupposes in the inquirer antecedent convictions as a groundwork ought to be no argument against it, for the subject is one to which of necessity every student will bring prepossessions of some sort. It would be hard indeed to frame a plea for the Bible that would convince an atheist. Moreover, it is to be questioned whether those who demand absolute demonstration as the condition of their accepting a religious faith will ever reach the object of their search in this world of uncertainties and probabilities.

But if I were to choose our Lord's method of illustrating truth by parables—a mode of teaching too much depreciated in our times,† although never

* Article VI.

† What Mr. Gladstone lately said of Bishop Butler, in connection with his doctrine of probable evidence, might with

were the aids to it more abundant—were I seeking to enforce my thought by an analogy, I would ask you to consider so common an object as a piece of branching coral. Here it is in your hands. It has been broken off and brought home by some sailor from the Pacific. Look at it; observe the curious and symmetrical arrangement of its parts. It is not a clumsy, ill-shaped thing at all. You get from it the same impression of beauty of form that the limbs of a tree, or a stag's antlers, or a group of rock crystals convey. But consider by what sort of a process of growth this marvelous result has been attained. In reality, there is a wide difference between this and the branches of the tree or the antlers of the stag. They grow by a continuous process and under the impulse of a single law of life. But how did this spray of coral come to be what it is? Ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of little insects lived and died there, each in its separate and appointed place, each heedless of every thing save the cool sea-water moving in and out, and yet there was not one of them which did not serve a far-off purpose.

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equal truth be said of him as the great advocate of analogical reasoning in theology: "Oh! that this age knew the treasure it possesses in him and neglects!" (Letter to Mr. James Knowles, Nov. 9, 1873.)

All the while a divine law of unity was governing and using for its own ends the lower law of individual life, and making each tiny polyp minister, without knowing it, to the perfection of the last result. And so in this matter of the unity of the Scriptures, the many writers were but the underworkmen, carrying out with more or less of conscious co-operation the purpose of the great Designer. Give all the credit to the coral insects they deserve. They did their patient work, and did it well; but not to them does the meed of authorship belong. That rests with God. He planned, He guided, He made perfect.

To prove to you, beyond the possibility of a doubt, the unity of the Bible, I have acknowledged to be impossible. But let me add that I did not undertake this task. My whole ambition and aim tonight has been to show how every man must prove it for himself. I do not believe that any thoughtful person whose doubts have been once awakened will ever acknowledge that the Scripture can not be broken, unless he has first become persuaded that the claim of Jesus Christ to be the Saviour of the world is true. I do believe that when a man has honestly and from the heart confessed this faith, it is then easy for him to see how the various parts of Scripture group themselves about one common cen-

tre. Such a believer will not be content with merely groping about the pages of the Old Testament to see if here or there he can pick up some sentence that may be construed into a prediction of the Messiah; rather he will be led to see how the whole experience of the people of God, from beginning to end, their bondage, their exodus, their wilderness life, their ritual worship, their struggles, their dissensions, their captivities, all had a part in the grand work of preparation by which God was drawing on "the fullness of time." But to see all this is to discern that the Bible has unity of subject, and to discern the Bible's unity of subject is to concede its unity of authorship; for it cannot be by a coincidence that such a multitude of voices join in one harmonious song; there must be a controlling voice behind on which they lean.

Again, I remind you of the crucial question, "Whom say ye that I am?"

If we reply with that disciple whose confession won for him the proud title of the Rock, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," then nothing will be easier that to accept the Bible as the biography of this God-man, the true hero of earth's story. But if to that solemn question we make answer thus, "We know thee not who thou art, nor do we greatly care to know," then

nothing will be more natural than to see in the Bible only the relics of a religion that has spent its force and is drawing to its death, a praiseworthy but obsolete effort of the oriental mind to find its God. Seeing then what tremendous issues hang upon the question, "What think ye of Christ?" shall any one venture to treat it as a matter of no consequence? Nay, my dear friends, if that question be still lying unsettled in your mind, grapple it, wrestle with it, pray over it, until, by God's grace, you find an answer, and an answer by which you are willing to abide. So shall you solve not only this problem of the Bible's unity, but many another problem also; and depend upon it, the solution thus reached through the pathway of a heart-experience will be worth more to you than any you could possibly find made ready to your hand.

Note.—Since this sermon was preached, I have seen for the first time the following paragraph at the close of Canon Westcott's *Bible in the Church*.* I append it here partly for the sake of bringing it under the eye of readers who might not otherwise fall in with it, and partly because of the pleasure it has given me to find my own convic-

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* The Bible in the Church, p. 296.

tions, as expressed in the sermon, coincident with those of a man whose judgment and authority in such a question are worth vastly more than my own:

"In a word, the history of the Bible is an epitome of the history of the Church. Both came to their full form, slowly, silently, surely, by the combination of manifold elements. Both grew by the action of an informing power, and were not constructed from without by any foreign force. Both include treasures new and old, of which now this, now that is needed for the instruction of men. Both have been overlaid by superstitious additions, both have been injured by an idolatrous reverence; but in both there is a life which makes itself felt, and refuses to be bound in one shape. The Bible, no less than the Church, is Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic: Holy, for they who wrote it were moved by the Holy Spirit; Catholic, for it embraces in essence every type of Christian truth which has gained entrance among men; Apostolic, for its limits are not extended beyond that first generation to which was committed the charge of preaching the Gospel in the fullness of its original power."

IMMORTALITY.

BY THE

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BISHOP OF RHODE ISLAND.

IMMORTALITY.

THIS mortal must put on immortality.—1 COR. 15 : 53.

IF it is difficult for a man to believe in his own personal immortality, it is equally so to conceive of a final cessation of being. The idea of absolute annihilation is not only abhorrent to the feelings, but it is also contradictory to our instincts and intuitions. And if all life is bounded by a span, we can not help asking, how did this notion of an immortal existence ever come to us? If it is a mere delusion, it is the only lie that has been incorporated into the texture of our humanity. Every other instinct and intuition has something objective which corresponds to it. The body finds food somewhere for the gratification of all its appetites; the ear was made for hearing, and the air is full of music; the eye was made to see, and form and color meet it at every glance; the heart was made to feel, and it is continually touched by experiences, which fill it with sorrow or with joy; the brain was made to be the instrument of thought, and the material

upon which it exercises itself is as varied as it is abundant; the spirit of man seems to have been made for immortality; it craves after an unending existence; and if it could be proved beyond a doubt that it must perish with the destruction of the tabernacle which it inhabits, there would go up from every tribe and nation one universal burst of execration against the Being who created the soul.

"But," we are told, "the soul was never created at all—it is only the development of one of the higher species of force, and the result of a peculiar organization. Apart from that physical organization, we can not conceive of man's existence; and as the spiritual part of our being originates with the physical, and is subject to all its contingencies, so the actual dissolution of the one must be accompanied with the destruction of the other."

But then we find in man this essential difference which distinguishes him from all other organized beings—there is in him a free, automatic, intelligent power, by which he can control his own movements and regulate his own development. In all other forms of earthly being, the organism is supreme; but man's noblest triumphs are achieved in defiance of his physical organization. And when all his nerves are tingling with fiery passion, and his heart throbbing with strong desire, and his blood

coursing with lightning speed through his veins, and his aching brain impelling him to yield, and in the majesty of his manhood he rises up, and says, "I will not yield!" then he comes to the consciousness of his immortality, for he feels that there is something in him which can defy and subdue the body, and is not subject to all the miserable contingencies by which it is controlled.

"That may sound somewhat grand," is the reply; "but after all, this notion of immortality must be a delusion, because we can form no actual conception of the future life; a disembodied soul, as it is sometimes called, is a simple nonentity. It has no functions, no capacities, no organs, and of course no locality. Men talk as if they had some idea of a spiritual existence, but they have no definite thoughts about the matter. The forms and analogies of the natural world are merely transferred to a domain where they cease to have any significance."

This is not an argument, but only an appeal to the imagination. What conception has an infant of the experiences that are awaiting him in his maturity? It might be worse than useless for us to know any thing very definite as to the outward conditions of our future life, and I think it is very doubtful whether there are any terms in the language that we now use capable of conveying to the

mind a distinct idea of those conditions. Even after we have entered the next stage of being, it is very probable that we shall require the same gradual training and experience, in order to comprehend the new modes of existence which await us there, that are needed in the process of our education here. When the boundary line has been passed, and we find ourselves standing in the presence of eternal realities, the veil may be lifted very slowly, and the glories of our immortality revealed to us, only as we have strength of vision to endure their brightness.

"But," adds the objector, "if man is immortal, would there not have been such palpable, unquestionable proof of the fact, that no possible room would have been left for a doubt? Why is it that so many who are really anxious to believe, and even crave after an immortality, are left in such wretched suspense, and find nothing to satisfy them? If there is another world, where we are to dwell hereafter, and where those are now living who once went in and out with us over the same threshold, why does it seem so far off, so impalpable, so unreal?"

There may be good reasons for keeping the future life, to a certain degree, remote from us and inaccessible, inasmuch as this removes the temptation that might otherwise beset us to busy ourselves with

curious speculations about the spiritual world, instead of giving our minds to the faithful discharge of the duties that pertain to our present life. Our work is here, our responsibilities all centre here, and the best preparation we can make for our future life is to be had in doing the work well which God assigns to us here on earth. And no one who is not thus fitting himself for immortality, deserves or can expect to be delivered from anxiety and doubt. Gloom and fear must haunt the man who always dwells amid the clouds and mists of the valley, breathing the thick, contaminated atmosphere of earth; but only let him climb to the mountain-top, where the heavens are clear, and the air is pure, then all his anxieties and doubts will vanish. He will see the bright towers of the New Jerusalem, and hear the echo of its silver bells. He who lives by faith in the Son of God, and obeys His holy law, can not doubt that his Saviour will admit him into an everlasting habitation, when his work here is finished.

"This is life eternal—to know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." "Faith is the substance," the basis, "of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is evidence, because, with the believer, the eternal life

has already begun. He enters upon his immortality when he becomes identified with Christ.

"But," it is again asked, "if the proof of an eternal life rests primarily upon divine revelation, how are we to account for the fact that, in the earlier dispensations, as, for instance, in the case of the Mosaic economy, there is no distinct and definite doctrine of immortality disclosed to man? Why was not this fact incorporated into the law, as it was then revealed?"

In the first place, that was a civil code, intended for the regulation of national as well as of private affairs, and there would have been an obvious impropriety in appealing to future rewards and punishments as the sanction of a civil law.

Again, this was not needed. The doctrine of a future life had never been questioned, and was an element in the popular traditional belief. The patriarchs supposed themselves to have occasional intercourse with spiritual beings and angelic inhabitants of other worlds, and believed that, when they died, they would rejoin those who had gone before them.

There was another reason for the silence of Moses on this subject, growing out of the fact that the doctrine of immortality among the Egyptians had assumed such prominence that it interfered with the

welfare and progress of society, made men indifferent to the discharge of their secular duties, while it exerted no salutary influence upon their character. The building of costly tombs absorbed the wealth that might have been devoted to the service of the living, and the material which should have been used to clothe the poor was expended in wrappings for the mummied dead. With them, the immortal life was regarded only as a continuation of earthly enjoyments and pursuits; and when, at their feasts, they placed a skeleton at the table, it was not as a solemn reminder of the vanity of all earthly things, but as a guest from the other world, with whom they expected to sit down hereafter to a more sumptuous repast. The doctrine of immortality with which the Israelites had become familiar in Egypt possessed no high moral or religious element, and at the time of the exodus they were probably not in a condition to accept any loftier view.

Passing on to another form of objection, our opponent says, "If you base the immortality of man upon the teachings of the New Testament, then it becomes identified with a doctrine of resurrection, which is equivalent to the reconstruction of our present bodies at some future period—the recompounding of their existing elementary atoms, after

they have been blown hither and thither by the winds, and been resolved into their primitive gases, entering in this form into the composition of various kinds of vegetable life, perhaps into the substance of a thousand different human bodies."

This is not the Christian idea of the resurrection, and St. Paul calls the man a fool who holds such a doctrine as that. In reply to those who ask, "With what body do they come?" he says expressly, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be"—that is, it is not the organic structure which is laid in the earth that appears again. But he always teaches that the soul is to have some sort of investiture in the spiritual world; it is "not to be unclothed." We know nothing as to the specific nature of what he calls "the spiritual body," but then we know just as little of the actual substance of which the natural or animal body is composed. Matter is revealed to us by its outward properties, and spirit by its manifestations, so that we apprehend the existence of both by the same process. That the spiritual body is somewhere and somehow enwrapped within the folds of the material form, as the oak is latent in the acorn, and will hereafter rise out of—which is what the word resurrection means—the natural body, is scriptural and rational.

That there will also be an analogy between the

natural and the spiritual body, as well as some sort of identity in the two forms of existence, I do not doubt. God "gives to every seed his own body." While the substance, or under-lying essence, of the one must be unlike that of the other, there may still be a resemblance in their appearance, and, to some extent, in their functions; not an *actual* identity, for, in its glorified state, all defects and impurities must be removed: "that which is sown in weakness will be raised in power," the blinded eye opened to discern all the beauties of the celestial firmament, the deafened ear unstopped to hear the melody of angelic anthems, the enfeebled arm made strong, and the crippled feet swift and firm.

It is a significant fact that whenever spiritual beings are spoken of in Scripture as revealing themselves to the sight, they appear in bodily forms, and are spoken of indiscriminately as angels and men. The Saviour ascended into the heavens in a human form which the Articles of the Church teach us He still retains.

"When you speak of *form*," continues our scientific skeptic, "if your words have any real meaning, the term must be intended to signify something which is capable of being bounded in space, and which, therefore, must have an outline or figure; and if this is in any sense a *body*, it must be com-

petent to exercise certain functions, such as changing its place, receiving and imparting knowledge, and doing whatever may be demanded by the exigencies of its condition."

We are perfectly willing to accept this statement, and if you say that all this requires the existence of some sort of physical organization, that there can be no action without limbs, and no sight without an eye, and no communication of thought without a tongue, and inasmuch as such organs are incompatible with the idea of spiritual being, therefore it is unscientific to believe in any such being—allow me to ask one or two questions.

If, a hundred years ago, some wild visionary had said that the time would soon come when, in looking with a magnifier at what appears to the eye as a little dot of the pen, you would be able to read in that dark speck every word of the Lord's Prayer, distinctly engraved, or see there a perfect copy of your friend's face; and then should be further told that this wonderful delineation had been wrought without the use of any instrument whatever, even without the touch of a human hand—would not such men as you have been almost certain to pronounce such a prediction unscientific, and therefore absurd? Suppose he had then gone on to say that, at the same period, merchants in New-York would

hold communication with their correspondents in London almost as readily as if they were sitting in the same counting-room, I imagine that the skeptic would insist upon knowing something of the process by which such a result was to be obtained, before he would consent to listen patiently to so preposterous a statement.

Suppose then, for his enlightenment and satisfaction, he should be told that the men of different continents conversed together by sending communications along the bed of the ocean, how far would this tend to reduce his skepticism? Suppose, then, he should be further informed that the principle involved in this mode of intercourse consisted in producing a simultaneous vibration on the coast of America and the coast of Europe, this vibration shaping itself into words and sentences; would this explanation satisfy him any better? And if, after all this, he should be told that the agent or power by means of which this would be done is something which the eye of man never saw—something which could never be weighed in the most delicate scales, something so nearly analogous to spirit that the same terms by which one is described are equally applicable to the other; if he had never believed in the existence of spirit before, I do not

think that such a story as this would be likely to convert him.

I have cited these illustrations to show that it is absurd and unscientific to deny the existence of spiritual beings, endowed with spiritual bodies, and capable of exercising all the functions which pertain to the highest condition of being, merely on the ground that we do not know how they are constituted, and by what modes they act. When you can tell by what process mind acts upon body, and body upon mind, in our present form of existence—how it is that a thought can gave an impulse to the flow of the blood, and the stagnation of the blood arrest the action of thought, then you may deny, with some better show of reason, the fact of your own immortality, because you are not able to comprehend the mysteries of that immortality.

"But," adds the objector, "this is not the only ground upon which I am led to question what I understand to be the Christian doctrine of a future life. There are certain moral reasons which have more weight in inducing my skepticism than any which are derived from science. Death, as a physical process, is merely the return of the elements which have been drawn from the atmosphere and the earth, in order to form the frame-work of a body, to their original condition. Now, if this de-

struction of the material building liberates the spiritual being, the man, who occupied it, and transfers him to a new plane of existence, it may be presumed that his spiritual or moral identity is not substantially affected by the change; otherwise, it is not the same man who moves away from the old habitation that once lived there. And yet I am told that instantly upon their entering into the spiritual state all persons are at once transformed, either into spotless angels, incapable of an error or a fault, or into infernal demons, incapable of a virtue, or even of that exercise of will upon which virtue depends. Now, wherever we draw the line which may be considered as separating the bad from the good in this world, on the border territory we find many persons whose position it is difficult to determine, and there is hardly an appreciable difference between the lowest man on one side and the highest on the other; and yet I am told that death at once remits all who stand on one side to a state of perfect happiness and holiness, and all others to the regions of irremediable woe. The difficulty in reconciling this doctrine with any intelligible idea of the justice of God," continues our skeptical objector, "is not relieved by removing the matter of salvation from a moral ground, and making it depend upon the reception of a rite, or the exercise of a

particular faith, because this seems to make the line of division altogether arbitrary, and takes away the idea of recompense and retribution, as based upon personal character. Still further, according to the popular theology, this world is the only place of probation, and the eternal destiny of every human being is determined at the moment of his death; but there are millions upon millions passing away every year, who have had no opportunities of moral discipline, and no enlightenment as it respects the true character of God, and their duties to Him. Now, dreadful as is the thought of annihilation, it is harder still to believe in an immortality which carries with it such doctrines as these."

We have tried to give the objector fair play, and to state his case precisely as we suppose he would put it; for, in these days, it is not worth while to blink the real difficulties which trouble even good people's minds.

There are three ways in which such objections as those which have just been stated may be disposed of. The first is by resolving the whole matter of probation and our final destiny into a sovereign decree of the Almighty, and denying man the competency to form an intelligible judgment as to what constitutes justice in the dealings of God with man. The reasons for declining to accept this so-

lution of the difficulty are so manifest that I need only to allude to them. It makes religion only an arbitrary matter, leaves no room for the exercise of personal responsibility, and destroys all those fundamental conceptions of justice which lie at the foundation of character and morality. I do not say that this has always been the practical result; for many of the best men that ever lived held and still hold this theological opinion; because there are other elements in their creed which qualify, if they do not destroy, the falsities which it contains.

The second mode of meeting the difficulty is by endeavoring to reconcile the elements which it embodies with our natural sense of justice. I confess that I am not competent to do this, and therefore I am obliged to seek for some other solution. And the only way in which relief can be obtained is by denying that the Christian doctrine of immortality is embarrassed by any such dogmas as have been urged to its discredit. If there is any one principle fundamental in religion, as well as in morals, it is that our conception of justice, as applied to God's dealings with man, must be the same as that which regulates our dealings with each other; otherwise, we really have no idea of justice whatever. If there is any one principle fundamental in the Christian religion, it is that destiny must

be according to character. All the teachings of Christ, and of His disciples, are based upon this. Men are indeed called upon to believe, in order to be saved; but the definition of saving faith is that "which works by love, purifying the heart." Its value is in its moral quality, not in any thing arbitrary or artificial. And while the doctrine of future reward and punishment is thoroughly interwoven with that of immortality, it is also certain that God will never inflict upon any creature that he has made, a worse doom than he deserves. This of course involves the principle that every individual must take his place in the next stage of being, not in accordance with any arbitrary classification, but in exact conformity to his individual deserts. No moral agent, who has lived as we have all lived, can ever claim a reward on the ground of his personal merit; for the balance of demerit turns against us all, and therefore we must all throw ourselves in faith upon the mercy of God in Jesus Christ; and still it is true that destiny will be apportioned in strict accordance with personal character. There can be no world in which all will stand on the same level; and, in the general apportionment of human destiny, and in determining the question of our salvation, God is to draw the line between the righteous and the wicked, and not

man; and probably He will do this upon principles very unlike those which would determine our judgments.

The only difficulty which remains unconsidered in the present connection is that which relates to the final condition of those vast multitudes, both in Christian and in heathen lands, who have had no opportunities of real moral discipline here on earth, and therefore no actual probation. As this is not a practical question, the Scriptures throw but little light upon it, simply affirming that those who have not been enlightened by revelation will be judged by the law written on their hearts, or in accordance with the light which nature furnishes. I will not insult the intelligence of this congregation by citing the familiar passage from the book of Ecclesiastes, "In the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be," in the present connection. It has nothing to do with the subject, and if it had, standing where it does, it would carry no authority; for other passages might be quoted from the same writer, which, separated from their connection, and used as mere proof-texts, would be made to teach the doctrine of man's annihilation. It is enough for us to know that "the Judge of all the earth will do right," and we may safely and confidently leave the adjustment of matters, with

which we have no practical concern, to be disposed of by Him.

There is one thing further which stands in the way of a belief in our immortality, or at any rate makes belief so shadowy and unsatisfactory that it takes no positive hold upon the popular mind, and excites but little real interest. And here, again, I would prefer that the objector should state his own case.

"I find myself," he says, "endowed with a great variety of tastes and capacities. If there is a God, and I am made in His image, all those gifts must have come from Him, and therefore they are the transcript and reflection of corresponding qualities pertaining to His own being. I love music and art; I find my happiness in exploring the wonders of science; I delight in genial society, and the brisk flow of elevated humor; I like to study men in the histories of the past, as well as in the conduct of the day. At times, I find myself absorbed in the great mysteries of philosophy, in trying to open the secret chambers of thought; and while I acknowledge that a sound moral nature and a profound sentiment of reverence are essential to a well-balanced character, I do not think that a man can fill up the full measure of his being if he is nothing more than what is ordinarily understood to be a pious person. And

any condition of existence would therefore seem to me imperfect and unsatisfactory, in which all the nobler elements of my nature did not find room for development and expansion.

"But, in the view that is ordinarily presented of the future world, I find no recognition of any such opportunities, or of any varieties, either of character or employment. Heaven is a place,

> 'Where congregations ne'er break up,
> And Sabbaths never end;'

as if mere rest from labor and attendance upon religious services filled up the whole measure of one's desires and capacities."

What shall we say, in reply to all this? Many highly respectable Christians would respond to the effect that such vain talk only indicated the want of true spirituality and the dominion of a carnal mind; and then go home to the enjoyment of their books and pictures and pleasant gardens, perhaps to resume the discussion of the matter around a table loaded with luxuries and sparkling with costly wines.

Is it not better to acknowledge that God is honored and served by the consecrated use of all the powers and faculties with which He has endowed us, and that our immortal life must provide for the

culture and exercise of every lofty gift which pertains to our nature? I believe that, as the redeemed will be employed hereafter in ministries of love and mercy, so there will be ministries of art and ministries of science; researches into the great facts of the universe, which have been prematurely arrested here by the hand of death, will be taken up again, and prosecuted to the end hereafter. In this primary stage of our being, we just read a chapter or two in the great book of knowledge which God has given us, when it drops from our hand, and the mortal vision closes forever. We have only had time to get some faint, imperfect notion of the marvels of creation, the mysteries of the human soul, the strange anomalies of life, the profound depths of the divine economy. Does the study end there?

With an eternity before us, which must be occupied with something; with faculties immeasurably quickened and expanded by the new sphere of existence upon which we have entered; with a field of observation opened to our view, which knows no boundary or limit; with no servile work to do, no clothing to weave, no food to earn, no houses to build, no investments to watch—have you any doubt that there will be such noble and varied employments for the mind and the heart as will test to the full

every capacity of our being, and reveal to us, one by one, such infinite wonders, that the song will spring spontaneously and perpetually from our lips, "Benedicite, omnia opera Domini!" With angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, the redeemed will laud and magnify God's glorious name in one unceasing anthem; but its chords and harmonies will be as varied and multitudinous as the stars. Every song that is sung there will be set to the same grand key-note: "Worthy is the Lamb!" will be the one absorbing theme; but, as the rainbow, which arches the great white throne, flashes with every color and tint of earth and sky, so that voice of praise will be as the voice of many waters; the voice of great thunders mingling with the soft harping of harps; all tongues and languages joining in praise and honor and glory and blessing to Him that was slain. Whatever else may occupy us, we shall never tire of that theme. Wherever our studies and researches may take us, we shall always rejoice to return and listen to His teachings, who hath redeemed us with His precious blood. There is one name that will forever be to us above every other name. And when eternity has grown old, we shall still feel that we have not begun to fathom the depths of the Saviour's love.

Some of you may be surprised and disappointed,

because we have attempted no elaborate and direct proof of the doctrine of man's immortality, but have merely addressed ourselves to the removal of certain popular objections. To ask your assent to this doctrine, on the ground of Scripture evidence, would be simply to change our base, and enter upon a more general subject; for no one who receives the New Testament as a revelation from God, can have any doubts in regard to his immortality. I have rested the general argument upon the simple ground that man is able to conceive of his own immortality, and, if this conception is a delusion, all faith in God becomes extinct. For, if any thing that pertains to our nature comes from Him, this instinct or intuition or consciousness must have been implanted in our souls by His hand. To believe that He has deceived us is the most horrible thought that can enter the mind of man. Then I do not know or care whether any thing is true, and I would prefer to believe that there is no God.

But, let it be observed that this general consciousness of immortality is never disturbed, until some subtle man begins to urge objections, and it is for this reason that I have confined myself to the consideration of those cavils, and tried to embody them all in one brief sketch, and dispose of them. If I have failed to do this satisfactorily, you must not

conclude that they can not be removed, but attribute the failure to my inability to cope with the subject. I am sure that I have not sought to evade the cavils of the unbeliever, or to meet them with ambiguous and uncertain replies. I have much more sympathy with those earnest but doubting souls, who are crying out of the darkness, and looking in vain for some gleam of light to illumine the pathway of the eternal future, but still looking with anxious hope, and trying to live as they think God would have them live, whether they are to die as the beast dieth or not, than I have with that great multitude who passively accept the fact that they are to live somewhere forever, and then go about their work and their play, as if nothing concerned them beyond the gains and the amusements of the day. Better to doubt honestly than to believe stupidly.

It is one thing to accept the fact of immortality as a part of one's creed, and another thing to receive it into the soul as a living power, so that we actually enter into our eternal life this side of the grave. "Heaven begun is the living proof that makes the heaven to come credible. Christ in you is the hope of glory. He alone can believe in immortality who feels the resurrection in him." The remedy for doubt is experience. When one can

say, with the apostle, "I *know* whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," death is abolished, and life and immortality are brought to light. They are now *seen*, and not merely believed in. They have the power of a present fact, and so they regulate our thoughts and conduct, just as they are affected by the things which stand right before us, and address themselves to our senses. A holy life is the surest protection against doubt and unbelief.

EVOLUTION

AND A

PERSONAL CREATOR.

BY

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EVOLUTION AND A PERSONAL CREATOR.

The subject assigned to me in this Course of Lectures, is "Evolution and a Personal Creator." It presents perhaps the most important aspect of the great controversy which is carried on, in this age, between Science and Religion. The conflict which, in former years, was waged upon the battle-fields of Astronomy and Geology, now waxes most fierce upon the long lines of vegetable and animal development. On the one side are those who claim to be the discoverers of certain facts and laws, in nature, as to the history of life on our globe, and the circumstances under which its various species have appeared. On the other are the advocates of a fundamental religious truth which they claim is seriously compromised by these alleged facts and laws.

It will be my purpose, in this Lecture, to take into consideration the present aspect of the controversy, so as to ascertain, if possible, what is likely to be its result in regard to the interests of Religion, both natural and revealed.

I cannot claim to come to the consideration of this subject without bias, or in fact without positive convictions. It is a profound saying of Goethe, "I can promise to be upright, but not to be without bias." It would be impossible for me to put myself in the attitude of indifference in regard to any question involving the existence of a Personal God. But I think I can claim to be earnestly desirous to consider dispassionately and candidly whatever theory may be urged as to natural phenomena, and the laws by which they are governed. I can certainly claim to have large sympathy with scientific investigation, and with the spirit, on the whole, in which it is prosecuted. In regard to the aspect of the general subject now before us, I would say, at the outset, that it is no part of my purpose to attempt to refute the theory of Evolution. I wish to hold, for the present, the position which Mr. Gladstone has recently assumed in regard to it, that of a suspense of judgment. I would say, however, that the direction of scientific discovery, for the last few years, seems to me to render it not improbable that, before this generation has passed away, some theory of Evolution will be generally accepted as the most rational explanation of the phenomena of nature. With this conviction I shall make it my special object to show that, even

if some theory of Evolution should come to be established as a scientific truth, it would not militate against any interest peculiar to Christianity, or in any way compromise the fundamental principle of religion—the personality of God.

It will be necessary, as our first step, to define the terms in which our subject is stated. This can be done only generally, and with approximate correctness; for fuller definitions would shut us up to some one of the various forms in which, on the one hand, the theory of Evolution, or, on the other, the truth of the personality of God, is held.

To begin with Evolution. Some idea of the difficulty of an accurate definition of Evolution may be derived from the fact that Mr. Herbert Spencer, a writer not usually wanting in clearness of statement, defines it as follows: "*Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity, to a definite, coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.*" Scientific as such a definition is, it is evidently unfit for popular use. We must seek for some other, which, while it will have less of scientific accuracy and completeness, will better answer the purpose we have in view. When we speak in this discus-

sion of Evolution, we mean the theory according to which all life on our globe is derived in a continuous and unbroken series, by natural generation, from original organisms. In extending the theory to its most general form, it embraces all phenomena, inorganic as well as organic, and affirms that all phenomena are linked with and proceed from preceding phenomena, by a process of development, in accordance with universal laws, from the most simple to the most complex forms.

The doctrine of a Personal Creator affirms the existence of a Being from whom all the phenomena of the Universe proceed, and by whom the laws, by which they are governed, were established. This Being, the doctrine also affirms, is self-conscious, and has those attributes without which personality is unknown to us, reason, affections, and will.

The idea of the absolute continuity of this process of Evolution necessarily excludes the idea of the exercise, since the beginning of the process, of what has usually been understood as creative power. Here is one point where the theory is thought to militate against the idea of a Personal Creator. It seems, according to this objection, to diminish the need of a Creator. Then it is generally held by the advocates of this theory, that back of this development, or previous to

this beginning, if it had a beginning, lies the unknowable, and the conclusion drawn is that if there is a Personal Creator it is to us as if He were not, for we cannot know Him. Besides this, whatever discredits that which has been accepted as a Revelation of a Personal Creator tends to diminish our sense of His Being, and since the theory of Evolution seems to conflict with the account given in the Scriptures of the Origin of Man, it has been thought that, in this way also, it not only compromises interests peculiar to Christianity, but tends to undermine our faith in the existence of a Personal Creator.

In entering upon the argument required by this supposed antagonism between the theory of Evolution and the truth of the existence of a Personal Creator, it seems to me desirable to find some ground which can be held in common by the Evolutionist, even if he is not a Theist, and the Theist even if he is not an Evolutionist.

Or in other words, I should be glad to conduct this inquiry upon the basis of an agreement between Theists, who are open to whatever considerations may be urged in favor of the theory of Evolution, and Evolutionists who, while their primary object is the investigation of nature upon scientific principles, are ready to consider candidly the arguments

which may be urged in behalf of the presence and agency of a Personal God in Nature.

In order to accomplish this, let it be remembered that the Evolutionist holds that there has been a period in the history of being, when whatever existed phenomenally was homogeneous, that is, all alike. What that was which then existed as matter, that is, as capable of affecting us as what we call matter now does, the Evolutionist will not undertake to determine. It may have been of inconceivable tenuity, or it may have been, though having all the attributes of what we call matter, only co-existent, immeasurably diffused force-centres. Some such condition the Evolutionist must believe to have at one time existed.

There is no difficulty whatever for the Theist in this view. Indeed, he most readily represents to himself, in this way, the phenomenal result of the original creative act. We have then here a common ground upon which both can stand. It is the critical point too in the whole controversy. The waves of this boundless ether, pulsating with its all-pervading forces, are perfectly representable in thought. Let us see if we, Theists or Evolutionists, can venture back together into the mysterious depths which preceded the phenomenal condition, in the presence of which we are now supposed to

stand; and then, turning our faces to the future, follow on together, in thought, through the vast cycles of time, the stupendous developments of the Universe.

If the Evolutionist should say here that it is true that such a condition of things must have existed, but that it is impossible to conceive of any preceding period when the phenomenal did not exist, this is true indeed, but it will not prevent our standing on common ground, nor impede the progress of our argument. It is impossible indeed to conceive of a beginning of phenomena, but it is also impossible to conceive of phenomena not having a beginning; and if the Evolutionist urges the one, the Theist can balance it by urging the other. So far then there is nothing gained or lost upon either side. Let the Theist waive the point of what precedes phenomena, and put the inquiry in this form: what is that which underlies phenomena and the forces which in phenomena are disclosed? The Evolutionist cannot stand upon the ground of utter nescience. He is compelled to admit, and he does admit, Absolute Being. He may say that we cannot know Absolute Being, but he is obliged to say that we know that Absolute Being exists. Mr. Herbert Spencer himself says, "*By the very conditions of thought we are prevented from knowing any*

thing but relative being; yet by these very conditions of thought, an indefinite consciousness of Absolute Being is necessitated." "*The axiomatic truths of physical science unavoidably postulate Absolute Being as their common basis.*" "*Both Religion and Science are obliged by the demonstrated untenability of their supposed cognitions, to confess that the ultimate reality is incognizable, and yet both are obliged to assert the existence of an Ultimate Reality. Without this, Religion has no subject matter; and without this, Science, subjective and objective, lacks its indispensable datum. We cannot construct a theory of internal phenomena without postulating Absolute Being; and unless we postulate Absolute Being, or being which persists, we cannot construct a theory of external phenomena.*" (First Principles, p. 190.)

It is impossible to overestimate the importance, in our argument, of this admission of Mr. Spencer. The Theist and Evolutionist alike have thus transcended phenomena and all the laws of their succession, and recognized an Ultimate Reality and Absolute Being. It matters not now what we know of this Being. We shall have occasion hereafter to consider that. Our point now is that Theists and Evolutionists have together drawn aside the phenomenal veil which hides the arcana of nature, and

recognized the Absolute Being within the sanctuary of the Universe.

But as we stand, Theists and Evolutionists, in imagination, in the presence of this boundless ocean of force-centres or ultimate atoms of matter, and recognize beyond and beneath it an Ultimate Reality and Absolute Being, the inquiry inevitably suggests itself, What is the relation of the Phenomenal Universe to the Absolute Being? It may be said, that it is impossible for us to have any knowledge in regard to any such relation, and that the whole subject is necessarily shrouded in impenetrable obscurity. But it may be replied that if the whole matter is thus beyond the sphere of human knowledge, then it is of course as unwarrantable to deny the relation as to affirm it. The Evolutionist would not hesitate to admit this. It would follow, then, upon this admission, that it is at least as reasonable to affirm this relation as to deny it. The Evolutionist might very probably agree that it is more reasonable to suppose that there is some relation between Absolute Being and the Phenomenal Universe. It is allowable for us at least to make the supposition, that there is some relation, and still further to make some supposition as to what the relation is. These allowable suppositions we can use as working hypotheses. Without stopping now

to examine the question as to whether we are entirely ignorant of Absolute Being and of its relation to the Phenomenal Universe, we will go only so far as the Evolutionist will permit us to go, without denying the validity of our position. He will not object to our hypotheses, since in regard to a matter of which, as he holds, we are entirely ignorant, any hypothesis is just as likely to be true as false. Postponing then any effort to show the validity of our hypotheses, I would suppose that a relation exists between Absolute Being and the Phenomenal Universe, that Absolute Being is Personal Being with Reason, Affections, and Will, that the Absolute Being is immanent in the Phenomenal Universe, and that the forces and laws of the Phenomenal Universe are merely expressions of the agency and will of the Absolute Being.

It is important to notice here that if the Evolutionist, while he cannot deny but that these hypotheses may be true, does not admit the validity of the evidence in behalf of their truth, it is not in consequence of holding the theory of Evolution. The theory of Evolution does not touch these hypotheses at any conceivable point. A man may hold that theory to its fullest extent, and in its most extreme form, and yet, in entire consistency, affirm every one of these hypotheses to be true. The only question

thus far in regard to which there is a difference of opinion, is a metaphysical one as to the possibility of our knowledge of the Absolute. Whether the theory of Evolution is true or false, this question remains unaffected.

Taking up, then, these hypotheses, reserving the evidence of their truth for a while, and contemplating, in imagination, this primitive condition of the Universe, we find ourselves in the presence of the original *hyle* (as the Greeks called it), or matter, in which are certain all-pervading forces and laws, which, upon our present supposition, are expressions of the agency and will of the Absolute Being.

It devolves upon us at this point to inquire what is the character of these forces, and what are the laws by which their operation in the Universe is governed? It is impossible of course to do more, at this time, than to state some of the principal forces and laws, and those upon which the Evolutionist relies as the methods by which the developments of the Universe are evolved. With the advantage of the magnificent discoveries of Science, we know something of these forces and laws, and we can see what would be the method and the results of their operation in the homogeneous mass we have supposed to be before us. There are certain primary truths through these forces and laws are

disclosed to us. Such are the Persistence of Force, the Continuity of Motion, and the Indestructibility of Matter. The last two are necessarily derived from the first; for "*our experiences of matter and motion are resolvable into experiences of force.*" I am following Mr. Herbert Spencer in this enumeration of primary truths, as I shall follow him also in his application of them to the process of Evolution, because I wish to show that the theory of Evolution, as stated by its most renowned advocates, is not inconsistent with the belief in a Personal Creator.

And here let it be noticed that whatever else may be the result of a process of evolution, these laws are not. They precede and underlie all phenoména. They are eternal principles. They inevitably suggest an eternal mind, of which they are eternal ideas. And we seek in vain for a subject in which these eternal principles can inhere, if not in the Ultimate Reality, the Absolute Being, the existence of which, according to Mr. Spencer, we are compelled to acknowledge.

I have referred to force, in the general, as including all forces, and under the general law of its persistence, other numerous laws will group themselves. The most prominent result at first of the operation of these forces, in accordance with these

laws, upon the homogeneous mass by which space is supposed to be filled, is to transform its homogeneous into a heterogeneous character. Lines of force striking a homogeneous mass, at different angles, and the motion of its particles necessarily following the direction of least resistance, will constitute a process of differentiation. We see the amazing and endless variety of the Universe begin. The play of these forces integrates enormous masses of matter. The process of integration is accompanied by that of segregation and equilibration. Groups, in a wonderful order, with vast intervals, move with inconceivable velocity through the abysses of space. Measureless periods of time roll away, and we behold the Stellar Universe, that Universe beneath the contemplation of which man trembles with the sense of his own nothingness, as he is overwhelmed with the splendor and majesty of this stupendous theatre for the development of life. As we stand at this point in the marvellous process, what shall we think of Absolute Being, the existence of which we are compelled to acknowledge? Are we any less sure of the agency of this Being, any less certain that there are Reason and Will behind all phenomena, than we should be if we had seen shaping hands come forth from the darkness, and build up the stately constellations? Nay, are we not more

profoundly impressed by the invisible and silent, and immensely protracted and infinitely patient agency by which phenomena seem to come into being! And as the Evolutionist recognizes the Absolute Being and its relationship to the phenomenal universe, and is filled with wonder and awe at the mystery of this rational development answering to, but infinitely surpassing, a reason of which he is conscious in himself, does not an almost irresistible impulse move him to a recognition of a Personal Being, and could any more reasonable utterance rise to his lips than this: "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Thine hands"!

Thus far we have witnessed but the mere prelude of that development which the Evolutionist claims has proceeded uninterruptedly in nature to the present time. We have seen that, up to this point, there is nothing in the theory, or the facts which support it, which conflicts with the idea of a Personal Being, from whom all this development proceeds, and by whom it is carried on. The only suggestion of difficulty, which is our alleged ignorance of the Absolute, is, as has already been said, a metaphysical difficulty, and is in no way the result of the theory of Evolution.

Would it conflict at all with the idea of a Personal Creator, if it should be supposed that the process, having reached this point, is still continuous, and moves up into a higher sphere, presenting an entirely new class of phenomena? If a Personal God chooses that the works of His hands shall be evolved step by step, each link joined to the preceding in an endless chain, instead of breaking up the continuity from time to time and beginning anew, does He thereby obscure to us the fact of His existence? Does not the continuous process, which is, in effect, one uninterrupted series of acts of creation, testify more clearly than a mere mechanical process, interrupted from time to time by special acts of creation, could possibly do to an infinite Reason, which sees the end from the beginning?

Supposing this to be so, and that there would be rather gain than loss for the Theistic argument, should it appear that the process of evolution is still continuous from inorganic to organic nature, we are prepared to consider the evidence to be offered that this is the case.

Suppose we still stand in imagination at the point we have already reached in the process of evolution. We presently behold a new phenomenon —that of life. It does not burst upon us suddenly in highly advanced organisms; we find it in the

simplest possible forms. In bringing the process before our minds, we can of course avail ourselves only of the facts which are made known to us of that early period in the stratified history of our globe. These facts are few; the record is exceedingly imperfect; but in connection with other facts now accessible to us, they seem to indicate that the first appearance of life, supposing we had been witnesses of it, would not have seemed to us any interruption of a continuous order of development. One who sees crystalline formation, with its delicate shoots branching out on either side from a central axis, would not be conscious of any disturbance of an established order in the appearance of plants, in the midst of what had hitherto been inorganic nature. In animal life, also, we reach a point where the transition from the inorganic would be almost imperceptible. In the *protogenes* of Haeckel we have, according to Mr. Spencer, "a type distinguishable from a fragment of albumen only by its finely granular character." There are certain remarkable facts also in this connection, recognized by scientific men, and appealed to by the Evolutionist in support of his theory. For instance, the matter constituting the living world is identical with that which forms the inorganic world. And what is still more remarkable is, that all the forces exerted in the living

world are probably either identical with the forces of the inorganic world, or are convertible into them. Besides, organic nature is all the time built up out of inorganic nature, and returns into inorganic nature again. It may be said, indeed, by those who oppose this theory, that organic nature is inorganic nature plus life, and that the addition of life to nature is a new creation. But since we are supposing a divine act in every change of phenomena, how does it detract from the creative agency of God, if we affirm that through a certain arrangement of molecules life is developed, and plants or animals take their place in the boundless fields of nature? This process of evolution, through inconceivably complex conditions and incalculable periods of time, has resulted, at last, according to the Evolutionist, in the flora and fauna of the vegetable and animal kingdoms of the present time.

We have thus passed in our survey of the history of phenomena from inorganic to organic being. Certainly no point has been reached where Theist and Evolutionist, whom we have thus placed in a temporary antithesis, need to separate. If life has at last appeared upon the stage of being by a process of fine gradations, instead of by a sudden irruption of a new order of things, is there any reason why the Theist should be disturbed? Is there any

reason why he should hesitate, in the supposed interest of theology, to accept this as the truth in regard to the first appearance of life upon our globe? He can recognize the All-powerful One behind this process just as well as he could, if he had seen a full-sized tree or animal start suddenly and without any phenomenal antecedents into being. And the Evolutionist, still haunted by the presence of the inscrutable Power which lies back of all phenomena, and which he recognizes, waits to hear whether a knowledge of this power is accessible to other than the mere scientific faculties of the mind, and is as far as possible from the affirmation of the fool who "has said in his heart, there is no God."

It is a part of my object, as I have already intimated, to present as fairly and strongly as I may be able to do, in the limits permitted me, the grounds upon which the doctrine of evolution rests and claims the acceptance of thinking men. It becomes desirable, therefore, at this point, to consider some of the laws and facts which exist in the animal world, upon which the process of evolution is alleged to rest.

It is then, in the first place, a well-known law in nature, that animal life constantly encroaches upon the means of subsistence, or, as stated scientifically, that animal life increases in a geometrical progres-

sion, while the means of subsistence increase only in an arithmetical progression. The inevitable consequence is, that a struggle for existence ensues, in which the more hardy and vigorous prevail, or in the language generally used in this connection, there is a "survival of the fittest." Then comes in the law of Heredity, or the likeness of offspring to their parents, by which there is a tendency to the extension and perpetuation of the stronger and better qualities. Then there is the tendency to variation, under the influence of special surroundings and acquired habits. These variations are almost always in the line of advantage to the animal, and becoming stamped, as it were, upon the organism, are themselves transmissible by inheritance. There is, therefore, a constant uplifting of life, a movement from the simple to the complex, from the unit to the manifold.

There are, however, certain objections in regard to this theory, which we are bound at this point to consider, candidly weighing the replies which the evolutionist has made.

The theory of evolution supposes that life has been undergoing ceaseless variation from the very first period of its existence, yet some of its earliest forms survive to the present day, and it is doubtful whether there have been any specific

changes within the periods of history. This is a difficulty which besets the theory in respect both to animal and vegetable life, and it may be well to consider it here for a moment in regard to both. The evolutionist meets it by the assertion of what he calls "persistence of type" in nature. With a tendency in organisms to indefinite variation, under the influence of external causes, there is also a tendency to adhere to the original type, and this tendency, under favorable circumstances, is able to persist through immense periods of time. It may be, also, the evolutionist can plausibly urge, that the whole period embraced in history is too short for perceptible changes in species of vegetable or animal life. Still further, it may be urged, there may be laws which restrain evolution in certain directions while permitting it in others. And last of all, the evolutionist may say to us that the more highly organized life is, the more stable it becomes, and that it now requires immensely more protracted periods to accomplish what we should call specific changes than was the case when organisms were generally less complex.

Another objection which has been urged against the theory of evolution is, that there is an absence in the geologic record of life of those fine gradations between what we call species, which might

be expected to exist if all life had proceeded by development from one or a few primordial germs. But the evolutionist might reply that the theory of evolution does not necessarily suppose this development to have proceeded from one or a few original germs. The development may have proceeded from a vast number of original germs, and upon a vast number of parallel lines. This would account for the absence of fine gradations between different species of animal life. But besides this, the record of life on our globe is very imperfect. The smallest proportion possible of the life which has existed has left any trace behind. There are gaps and chasms everywhere in the record. The entire contents of strata of immense depth have been utterly destroyed. Now, if we suppose that no such destruction of organic remains had taken place, who can say but that these gaps and chasms would be found to be filled up, and that we should behold a record of all the various forms of animal life, blending by imperceptible gradations into each other? But while such a development of life has been everywhere and at all times interrupted and arrested, there are preserved, here and there, traces of the links by which various species were united. The fossiliferous strata present not a few of what are called intercalary forms filling up the

gaps between different species, and suggesting to the thoughtful mind the missing characters which have disappeared from the record.

It has also been urged against the theory, that no instance has ever been known of one species passing into another, and that therefore the doctrine of the transmutation of species, which is involved in this theory, is destitute of foundation. The answer which is made to this objection is that the evolution is not supposed to be lateral, that is, from what we call one species to another already existing species, but that it is uniformly in the line of the gradual improvement of species. Thus, even within the historical period, in which the time for such developments has been so brief, we find such an advance as to constitute, on any accepted principle of classification, a new species. The order *columbæ* is, as is well known, a notable instance of this. There is nothing better understood by naturalists than the ease with which variations are established and transmitted in the pigeon tribe. With such an indication of a tendency in nature to permanent and rapidly increasing variation, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that sufficiently protracted periods of time, with the inevitable struggle for existence, and the fact of the trans-

mission of acquired peculiarities, may be sufficient to account for all the varied development of life.

There is a remarkable passage in Coleridge's *Aids to Reflection*, in which that profound philosopher anticipates, by a sort of insight into nature, the discoveries of the last few years, as to the ascending evolution of life. He says, "Every rank of creatures, as it ascends in the scale of creation, leaves death behind it or under it. The metal, at its height of being, seems a mute prophecy of the coming vegetation, into a mimic semblance of which it crystallizes. The blossom and flower, the acme of vegetable life, divides into correspondent organs with reciprocal functions, and by instinctive motions and approximations seems impatient of that fixure by which it is differenced in kind from the flower-shaped Psyche that flutters with free wing above it. And wonderfully, in the insect realm, doth the irritability, the proper seat of instinct, while yet the nascent sensibility is subordinated thereto—most wonderfully, I say, doth the muscular life in the insect, and the musco-arterial in the bird, imitate and typically rehearse the adaptive understanding, yea, and the moral affections and charities of man. Let us carry ourselves back, in spirit, to the mysterious week, the teeming work-days of the Creator, as they rose in vision before

the eye of the inspired historian, of *the generations of the heavens and of the earth, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens.* And who that hath watched their ways with an understanding heart could, as the vision evolving still advanced toward him, contemplate the filial and loyal Bee; the home-building, wedded and divorceless Swallow; and above all, the manifoldly intelligent Ant tribes, with their commonwealths and confederacies, their warriors and miners, the husband folk, that fold in their tiny flocks on the honeyed leaf, and the virgin sisters, with the holy instincts of maternal love, detached, and in selfless purity—and not say to himself, Behold the shadow of approaching humanity; the sun rising from behind, in the kindling morn of creation. Thus all lower natures find their highest good in semblances and seekings of that which is higher and better. All things strive to ascend, and ascend in their striving."

When we thus contemplate nature, the very fact of its wonderful order, and its universal subordination to law, only makes it seem to us all the more instinct with a divine life. The evolutionist, in the presence of this rational development, can utter no reasonable protest, if we exclaim—

"God of the Granite and the Rose!
Soul of the Sparrow and the Bee!
The mighty tide of Being flows
Through countless channels, Lord, from Thee.
It leaps to life in grass and flowers,
Through every grade of being runs;
While from Creation's radiant towers,
Its glory flames in Stars and Suns."

The difficulty culminates, however, as we reach that point in the process where man appears. I wish to speak here with the utmost care, lest I should be misunderstood. The theory which involves man in this process of evolution, whether as regards his body alone, or both the body and the soul, is inconsistent with the interpretation of the scriptural account of the origin of man, which I, in common with other believers in Christianity, have received. I confess to very great reluctance to having that interpretation revised. I am by no means prepared to admit that a process of evolution, including man, is as yet so thoroughly established as to render it certain that this interpretation must be modified. But I remember that previous interpretations of the same class of subjects have been modified, and even abandoned, and yet the great historical faith of the Church has survived unimpaired. I recognize the fact, so plainly disclosed in history,

that true interpretation of the Scriptures has been largely dependent upon scientific progress. I believe the investigation of nature to be one of the means by which the Holy Spirit leads us into all truth. I do not dare, therefore, to affirm that my interpretation of the Scriptures on this point is a finality, connected as it is only indirectly by a logical process with any article of the faith. I can not venture to subject the faith itself to the stress and strain which should be borne by my fallible interpretation alone. I must be open, therefore, to any truth which God may teach in nature, in response to human inquiry; and faith should be strong enough for a full assurance that all such truth will lead to more glorious views of God, and of that salvation which He has provided for mankind.

It is not necessarily involved in my subject to consider the possible reconciliation of the scriptural account of the origin of man with the theory of evolution. But the possibility of such a reconciliation, should the theory be established, is so important, and so closely connected with the purpose which I have in view, that I will not evade the difficulty, nor shun the delicate task of its consideration.

It will be well for us then to remember, lest our apprehensions should be unduly excited, that the

interpretation in question has never had the sanction of the Church, nor of the entire body of Christian teachers. St. George Mivart has shown conclusively that a theory of evolution was held by some of the most distinguished of the Christian philosophers of the period of the schoolmen. In fact, it is not at all certain but that the interpretation in question is itself the result of the imperfect science of earlier periods, and that the mischief, in this respect, which science has done, science is now to repair.

Let us understand clearly the difficulty we are to meet here. It is not the question of the existence of a Personal God. That question is not involved, in any special sense, in the origin of man. It is not the question of the freedom of the will and moral accountability. There is nothing in the theory of a process of evolution inconsistent with the arrival of being, at some point, to all that which is involved in the moral attributes of man. The question is not mainly whether the scriptural account of this matter is to be understood literally, or is an account cast in a poetic form. The account itself, in the indiscriminate use in it of Hebrew words signifying to create and to make, as well as in other respects, affords indications that it was not intended to be cast in a mould of rigid scientific accuracy.

Neither Christianity nor the claims of God's word would be compromised, even if the Mosaic account should be proved to be an Oriental allegory, teaching important truth under poetical forms. The real difficulty here encountered is in regard to the fall of man, which is a fundamental fact in historical Christianity. At first view, it seems entirely inconsistent with the theory of evolution. That presents to us, apparently, an uninterrupted progress towards a higher and better condition. What place is there, then, in the process, for such a fact as the Fall?

In answering this question, we are led to the consideration of a peculiarity, in this process, which has attracted the attention of scientific men. This peculiarity has been described as an occasional blundering or blind groping of nature. There seem to be tentative movements in nature. There are failures and positive degenerations. There is a tendency to variation, not only in the direction of advantage and progress, but of arrested development and deterioration. This fact, about which there is no dispute, has been thought by some to furnish an argument against design in nature. There is a sufficient reply to that suggestion, but its consideration does not come now within our province. The use which I wish now to make of it is as an indica-

tion in the lower physical order of what takes place in the higher moral realm of nature.

There is then a tendency to degeneration, as well as to progress, in nature. If the theory of Evolution is true, the same law will manifest itself in the moral order. And what is the Fall of Man but that fact in the moral order, of which we have a prophecy in the deteriorations of the physical world!

It will be wise in us to watch carefully the progress of investigation in this respect. The results already reached are certainly not of a character to be set lightly aside. The indications, in embryology, of the links between man and the lower orders of animal life; the foreshadowing of human sentiment and emotion in the passions of the brute creation; the startling suggestion which obtrudes itself, as we study nature, that certain habits in man may be the transmitted results of habits acquired all along that line of organic development, through which humanity has been built up from the dust of the earth; the wonderful fact that the book of Genesis itself groups man with the lower orders of animal life in the last period of creation; all these considerations should be thoughtfully and candidly weighed. I am perfectly aware of the strength of the arguments which are urged against these considerations on

strictly scientific grounds. One eminent man has not long since passed away, who, with the highest scientific reputation, was a conspicuous opponent of these views. I need not dwell upon the position, in this respect, of Professor Agassiz. This community will have the opportunity within the next fortnight of listening to a full exposition of this subject, from one of our most distinguished scholars and divines, the Rev. Dr. Osgood. But it is a significant fact that Professor Agassiz leaves scarcely any successor, in the higher walks of science, to his opinions upon the subject of evolution. The apparent inevitableness of the drift of scientific opinion in the direction of this theory can hardly be appreciated by any one who is not familiar with the principles of scientific investigation. A discovery, which, to men generally, would have little significance, is, to the intellect trained in scientific methods, full of suggestiveness as to the plan of nature. The unanimity among scientific men, with which these discoveries are regarded as pointing in one general direction, and demanding an interpretation of nature upon the hypothesis of Evolution, is something very remarkable, and should receive the serious consideration of at least every educated Christian man. It is the solemn duty of the Christian world, in view of what may ere long be universally

accepted scientific opinions, to give its best thought to the discrimination which may be made between interpretations of certain portions of the Scriptures and the essential facts and truths of the Christian faith.

Professor Agassiz, while opposing the theory of evolution, planted himself firmly, in one respect, upon a foundation, from which it was impossible for him, by any scientific conclusions, to be removed. He claimed to recognize everywhere in nature the thought of God. Science, within the self-appointed limits of the investigation of phenomena, and the laws of their sequence, can never disturb this position; for it lies outside of phenomena, and is affirmed by faculties higher than the mere scientific faculties of the mind. The evolutionist, who does not recognize any thing outside of phenomena as constituting a part of his philosophical system, can take no exception to this, any more than to the other hypotheses which we have made. We, as theists, have gone with the evolutionist all along through the history of phenomenal being. We do not venture to say but that all he claims as to the order and method of the development of nature may be true. We hold him, also, at this point, to these admissions; that there is Absolute Being back of all phenomena, and that, in the absence of

any possible knowledge of this Being, the hypothesis that it is a personal Being, who has constructed nature upon a rational plan, the features of which we can trace in the phenomenal Universe, is, at least, as reasonable as any other.

But we are now prepared to go further. We have kept common ground, so far. Now we affirm that the position of nescience, in regard to Absolute Being, is untenable, and that there are satisfactory and conclusive considerations which should carry the mere scientific investigator with us, when we affirm the truth of the hypotheses which we have made. It is in vain to claim that we know nothing of Absolute Being. We assert for ourselves some knowledge of it when we affirm that it exists. If, then, personality is denied to it, that is a still further claim to knowledge; for on what possible ground can the absence of personality be affirmed of a Being, of whom nothing is known? It is, however, no more than fair to notice the fact that there are certain grounds upon which the personality of Absolute Being is denied. But it must be remembered that the whole discussion is now transferred to the realm of metaphysics, and the man of science abandons here the peculiar prestige which belongs to him in the scientific field. From the moment that he penetrates beyond the mole-

cule, where matter vanishes from any test to which he can subject it, all through the supposed atomic constitution of matter, back to Absolute Being, he is traveling in the realm of metaphysics. In the realm, then, of metaphysics, we would meet this affirmation of nescience, in regard to Absolute Being, and this consequent scepticism as to its personality.

Since there is nothing in mere personality, that is, in the conscious possession of intellect and will, which is inconsistent with Absolute Being, the grounds for its denial must be sought indirectly and outside of the mere existence of Absolute Being. It is accordingly affirmed that the idea of Absolute Being excludes all relation, and that therefore we can not conceive of the Absolute Being as cause and the Universe as effect, or of any idea of Absolute Being, and a phenomenal Universe, except the pantheistic idea—which makes God to be all things and all things to be God. This position overlooks the distinction, which evidently should be made, between an Absolute Being, which can not hold any relation to a phenomenal Universe and an Absolute Being, which, while no such relation necessarily exists, can hold it at its will.

It is conceivable then, that Absolute and Unconditioned Being may hold relations at its will. It

can conceivably project an object of which it is the subject. It can make itself the Cause of which the Universe is the Effect. Is there, then, a Personal Being back of all the phenomena of Nature? I reply, that an affirmative is at least as reasonable, by the admission of all, as a negative answer, and that since a voluntary relativity is conceivable in Absolute Being, there are such indications of reason and will in nature, as to make it violently unreasonable to deny that the rationality of the Universe is owing to the will of a rational and consequently personal Absolute Being.

A question comes up at this point in the discussion, which it is important for us to consider. Absolute Being back of all phenomena is admitted in this controversy; but although much is affirmed on one side as well as the other, in regard to it, it is claimed that "it is something which lies outside of the range of our knowledge." This necessarily suggests the question, what knowledge is possible to us; whether, in other words, it is possible for us to know any thing otherwise than by the faculties employed in scientific investigation. I can not, of course, enter here upon the discussion of so great a subject. I can only indicate the sure and safe ground which the Christian philosopher can take. We need to take our stand upon the higher spiritual philosophy,

that of Plato, and Leibnitz, and Kant, and Coleridge; affirming the distinction between the reason and the understanding, and claiming an intuitional power in reason as the basis of our higher knowledge. I am not insensible to the dangers of the transcendental philosophy, but I can not express too strongly my sense of the importance of familiarity, on the part, especially of Christian ministers, with the general principles of the philosophy of the great world-teachers to whom I have referred. Blaise Pascal has given the highest expression of this philosophy, in a wonderful passage, in which he says, "Divine things are infinitely above nature, and God only can place them in the soul. He has designed that they should pass, not from the head into the heart, but from the heart into the head. And so, as it is necessary to know human things in order to love them, it is necessary to love divine things in order to know them." The great Dante also has beautifully and profoundly stated the attitude of this philosophy in regard to the knowledge of God.

> "Lume è lassù che visibile face
> Lo creatore a quella creatura—
> Che solo in lui vedere ha la sua pace."

"There is above a light which makes visible the Creator to that creature who finds his peace only in the vision of Him."

Before closing what I have to say, there are one or two points to which I wish for a moment to refer. I have, in this lecture, placed those who hold the doctrine of Evolution, in the position of those who are not prepared to take distinctively Theistic ground. This I have done, as must have been perceived, only for the temporary purposes of my argument. But having done this, I feel that they ought in all fairness to be allowed to speak for themselves on this point, and I therefore quote a passage from the works of Mr. Darwin, one of the most distinguished representatives of this school:

"There is a grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on, according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms, most beautiful and most wonderful, have been and are being evolved."

Another point to which I would refer is the charge of materialism, which is made very generally against men of science at the present day. That there are some, especially in Germany, who are justly chargeable with materialism, in the worst sense of the term, I have no doubt. There are some probably in England who are liable to the same charge, but I should not include among them the

recognized leaders of scientific thought. The scientific investigations of the last few years have modified the character of materialistic philosophy. All scientific men at the present day believe in the atomic constitution of what we call matter; but so far as they know—and the leaders among them unhesitatingly admit it—the ultimate atoms of matter may be only force-centres, and therefore what we understand as spiritual entities. I am not insensible to the dangerous character of prevalent materialistic views as to the freedom of the will and other closely related subjects; but I do not hesitate to say that the materialism of which I have just spoken, that which indissolubly associates life and force with what we call matter, and which is as ready to express the facts of nature in terms of spirit as of matter, is not a dangerous materialism,—and is, just as much as the idealism of Bishop Berkeley, consistent with the Christian faith.

I wish also to say that in whatever concessions I may have made to the theory of evolution, I am not to be understood as an advocate of any view which separates God, at any moment, from the phenomenal universe. The idea of the exercise of creative power, at the initiation of each species of life, does exclude God, to some degree certainly, from the intermediate periods. My view recognizes God as

the First Great Cause, and beholds His working and immediate agency in every minutest change in the phenomenal universe. What is true of man is true of all existence: "In Him we live and move and have our being."

There is one more point to be considered. If there is such a process of evolution, what may we anticipate as its end? Is it to go on until there are beings as far above man as he is above the lower orders of animal life? In answering these questions, we shall be aided by what is a scientific conception, and that is, that if the phenomenal universe has proceeded from Absolute Being, to Absolute Being it will return. But this is just what is presented to us in the fundamental facts and principles of the Christian faith. The tide of being which has flowed from God and culminated at last in man, must return to God. This it does in the Incarnation, by which man is united to God, and God to man. The circle from Absolute Being back to Absolute Being is complete. Those who are familiar with nature, and see how one thing answers to another, and all things seek harmony, and symmetry, and completeness, will recognize the presence of a universal law in this linking together of man, as the final result of development, with God, in Christ. Christ then stands as

the highest and final expression of this evolution, evolved from the bosom of humanity and yet coming forth also from the being of God. He is the highest expression of which the process is capable. It ends with Christ, in God.

I have now completed the manifestly difficult and delicate task assigned me. Every word which I have spoken, has been inspired by an earnest desire to do what I could to allay apprehensions which have been excited by the supposed attitude of Science toward natural and revealed religion. If the doctrine of successive and intermitted acts of creation should finally be abandoned, it will be replaced by a far higher conception of God, according to which every phenomenal change depends upon what is virtually a creative act, and the inconceivably vast development of Nature springs forth at every point of space and every moment of time, from God. The last thing in regard to which any fear need be entertained, is the future of the historical faith of the Christian Church.

A poet of our time has represented Christianity in the likeness of a majestic angel, with helmet and sword, vainly attempting, in the presence of the Sphinx, to answer the problem of human destiny. The helmet falls from her head, and the sword from her hand, and she stands mute and powerless. The

future, we may rest assured, will reverse the representation. The helmet will rest upon the calm and serene brow of the angel; the sword will be held in her invincible hand, and the answer will be given which solves the mystery of our being. Science has reached a point in its investigations, where it will become more reverent. The Absolute Being which it already recognizes will be seen to be the personal Creator and Governor of the Universe. The interpretation of Nature will be more thorough and clear, and the testimony to the Infinite Being, the Moral Governor of the World, will be so overwhelming and decisive that there will be a universal acknowledgment that—

"Earth with her thousand voices praises God."

The foregoing Lecture was, for the most part, unwritten at the time of its delivery, and it was suggested to me by some of my friends, for whose opinions I have the highest regard, that in writing out the Lecture for publication, I might have the opportunity of modifying certain positions which I had assumed, or statements I had made. After very mature consideration, I have not felt at liberty to do so. It seems to me right that I should reproduce

the Lecture, as far as possible, from phonographic reports taken at the time. I am the more content to do so, in view of the fact that I can not conscientiously modify any of the views which I have expressed. I humbly trust that they may be useful to the great cause which I have most of all at heart. If I am mistaken in any of the grounds which I have taken, I am most anxious that it should be made clear, at whatever cost to myself, and since it is possible that I may have erred in the concessions which have seemed to me to be due to the scientific conclusions of the present age, I would ask, in all humility, if this should be the case, the forgiveness of the Great Being, for whose glory I have earnestly prayed each word might be spoken.

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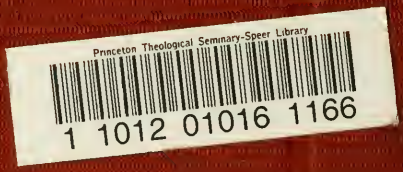
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